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CHRISTMAS.

BY HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

O CHRISTMAS morn that dawned so fair
Across the dark and dewy glen,
Where shepherds heard the joyous song,
Peace on the earth, good-will to men:

What glare eclipses your sweet light
With half the shrinking world on fire,
With blood and reek and battle-smoke,
And ruined home and blazing byre!

What creatures with the thirst of wolves
Round a beleaguered nation run!
What answering armies with their lines
Of angry shade insult your sun!

Down what a length your lustre swims,
A murky length of grief and pain;
Did you, two thousand years ago,
O Christmas morning, dawn in vain?

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1870.

☞ *With this Number of* HARPER'S WEEKLY *the Publishers take pleasure in presenting their readers with another superb*

EIGHT-PAGE SUPPLEMENT,

prepared with special reference to CHRISTMAS-TIME. *It contains Four Splendid Full-Page*

CHRISTMAS ILLUSTRATIONS,

drawn expressly for this Number by SHEPPARD, NAST, *and* EMSLIE; *Christmas Stories, Poems, and other literary attractions.*

☞ *Owing to the pressure of Christmas matter in this Number, the commencement of the series of papers on* ARCTIC ADVENTURE *is necessarily deferred.*

☞ *Persons desiring to* RENEW *their Subscription to this Paper will much oblige the Publishers by sending in their names as early as convenient* BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF THEIR PRESENT SUBSCRIPTION. *This will obviate the delay attendant upon re-entering names and mailing back Numbers.*

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

PRELUDED by a season of remarkable softness and beauty, Christmas is here! For us happy Americans it is also merry Christmas. While Europe bleeds with war, and is anxious with foreboding, America hums with peaceful industry, and the future stretches out like a flowering prairie to the summer sky. The dark cloud that for five years overshadowed for us the holy time has passed away, and the country has emerged brighter and better from the terrible discipline. Yet the season will not fail to refresh a thousand tender ties, and to bring before us the figures of those whose presence was the charm, as their memory is now the benediction, of innumerable homes. It is that remembrance also, so natural to the time consecrated to domestic affections, which, as we stand around the glittering Christmas-tree, will deepen our sympathy for the German homes, from which that tree was brought to us, and in which there is unspeakable sorrow and fear today. The same remembrance will soften our hearts for the homes of France, too, desolate and ruined. So sad and solemn a Christmas France has never known except in the dark days of the terror.

The day itself falls this year on Sunday, and in every pulpit in the United States there will be a service of especial remembrance. If only the tongues that speak could be touched with the holy fire! If only the great lesson of the life of Him whose birth we commemorate could be so set forth as to become the golden rule of the individual and national life! If only it could be made the faith of our daily conduct, that to serve men is to worship God! For that is the Christmas sermon and the Christmas carol. The song that the Bethlehem shepherds heard is the song that we all hear in our deepest consciousness, that good-will to men is peace on earth. And the preacher who paints the truest picture of the patient, cheerful, simple self-sacrifice of the head of Christendom—who shows that the joy of the Christmas season is most appropriate to the memory of a teacher in whom was no gloom, no asceticism, but an overflowing tenderness of human love and sympathy—he will be truly the Christian preacher, and his sermon a carol which every generous heart will echo.

A STRAW THAT SHOWS THE WIND.

THE resolution of Senator M'CREERY, of Kentucky, was properly characterized by Senator SUMNER as an illustration of what may be expected if the Democratic party should return to power. The resolution proposed substantially that the remains of seventeen thousand Union soldiers should be removed from the Arlington estate, in order that the widow of ROBERT E. LEE should live there. Such a proposition was the grossest insult to the patriotism and good sense of the country, and therefore to the Senate, their representative, and the Senate almost unanimously resolved that it should not be received. The Democratic Senators were greatly confused by the motion of Mr. M'CREERY. As partisans they saw its effect. It was an unnecessary revelation of the real spirit of the party, and the party leaders know that the country is at least loyal, and that they can hope to succeed only by persuading the people that the party has renounced its sympathy with the spirit and the principles which produced the rebellion. Some of his Democratic friends, therefore, rebuked Mr. M'CREERY, who assumed all the responsibility of the resolution, and tried to withdraw it. But Senator EDMUNDS held him fast to the rules, and by a vote of fifty-nine to four the Senate refused to receive the resolution.

The Democratic press does not openly defend the resolution. But the manner in which it alludes to it shows how gladly it would defend it if it dared. The death of General LEE gave that press an opportunity to show the tendency of its sympathy, which it zealously improved. The extravagant eulogies which were heaped by the Democratic papers upon a man whose only claim to the notice of history is that he tried to destroy the government of the United States in order to establish a slave empire upon its ruins were very suggestive. And the fact, which is constantly refreshed in the public mind by such incidents, that the Democratic party is the next friend and mourner of the lost cause, should impress upon the country the great and controlling truth of the political situation. That truth is that the nation has entered a new epoch, with new principles and a new policy; that the principles are those of the Republican party; while the Democratic party is the representative of the era and the principles which have passed away. There is no evidence of any disposition upon the part of the Democratic party to accept the new situation, or to acquiesce in what has been accomplished. Its last national declaration was that the new order is unconstitutional and void, and its conduct, wherever it has the ascendency, shows an undiminished sympathy with a spirit which the country abhors.

And even were this not so—even had the same policy which led the Delaware Democratic Senators to censure Senator M'CREERY's resolution persuaded the party to profess sympathy with the regenerated Union—it would still be impossible to say why a party of such composition and of such a history should be intrusted with the administration of a policy which it had always opposed, and which is founded upon political principles which it has always derided. After the Revolution the government of the new Union was confided to the friends of the principles upon which it was established—the men whose convictions and ability had opened the new era to the country. After the war of 1812 the government was controlled for many a year by the party which had made the war, and which was in full harmony with its spirit. And now, the country having entered upon a new era more glorious than any in its history, and under the auspices of the Republican party, that party is the one which will deal with all questions in the spirit of the new time, and with the sympathy of profound conviction.

A party whose newspapers hate to speak with decency of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, but which quiver with adulation of ROBERT E. LEE, and from one of whose Senators proceeds the astounding proposition that the bones of Union soldiers shall be removed almost from under the shadow of the Capitol, that the widow of LEE may not be offended—a party which still believes the war to have been an outrage upon the "South," and which would undo all of its great work that it can—is a party which does not comprehend the new America, which is not inspired by its faith, and whose restoration to power would be the sorest of national calamities.

THE NEW MINISTER TO ENGLAND.

THE appointment of General SCHENCK as minister to England is one to which even the *World* takes no exception. The general ability, the high character, the special experience, the ample knowledge of public affairs, and certain qualities of character and temperament peculiarly fit the new minister for his functions. He will be accepted by the whole country as an admirably representative American, in a sense which every body comprehends; not the Pogram or Jefferson Brick American, but a man sincerely and practically in sympathy with what is called the popular heart of the country. He knows instinctively the view which the average American will take of every subject, and the average American governs the country. General SCHENCK will, therefore, involuntarily represent public opinion in the United States to all concerned. Sturdy, intelligent, prompt, and self-possessed, the English statesmen will find in the new American minister a man with whom they can discuss every question that may arise as directly and frankly as with any of his predecessors. We do not mean that the most perfect courtesy, and the grace of the highest breeding, as it is called, are un-American, nor that a man more truly represents us in the degree that he is a boor, which seems to be the theory of some people who absurdly imagine that they are peculiarly American when they are peculiarly coarse and ill-mannered. But there is a certain inflexible independence which is agreeable to gentlemen of every country, and England will find it in General SCHENCK.

He is not the man for an ornamental mission, and therefore it is to be presumed that he will be instructed to take up the *Alabama* question and settle it. If this presumption be correct, it implies that the Government has a very distinct view of the manner in which that controversy should be concluded. We hope sincerely that this is the fact, and that the Government will not politely wait for England to make the first move. It is true, as has been said a hundred times, that we can afford to wait if England can. But that is child's-play. Our treaty-making power sent out an agent unanimously confirmed. He made a treaty which our own Executive proposed, and which was modified at our suggestion. It was signed and submitted to the treaty-making power, and the Senatorial branch of that power threw it out of the window. "If that is not what you want, as you gave us every reason to suppose," says England, "what is?" To reply, "Oh, well, if you want to settle, make us another offer!" is to invite hostility, which is not statesmanship. The United States will not lose by any kind of magnanimity, and we hope that General SCHENCK's instructions will be ample to propose the treaty which we intend to ratify. But no American can forget that, even if he is unanimously confirmed, and invites negotiation and proposes terms, and even if those terms are accepted without alteration by the English Government, that Government can have no confidence whatever that the Senate will not fling the treaty out of the window or kick it down stairs. We have no reason to be surprised, therefore, if an air of doubt should hang over the negotiation upon the part of England—a doubt which we have taught her.

The *Alabama* question is twofold. It involves specific claims for damages, and also considerations of international law. If England prefers to treat for the claims only, and we should acquiesce, the very object of a treaty would be left unsettled; for the real object is the restoration of good feeling. Our proposition, therefore, should be made in a truly friendly spirit. The treaty should not be in the nature of a truce between inevitable belligerents, but it should be a bond of real friendship. That is what the better sentiment of both countries would make it. And to that end the serious questions of international obligation ought to be considered. The recent changes in the British neutrality law cover much of what might be suggested by us. But a distinct declaration of the national duty of making the local law adequate to the fulfillment of international obligation would be of the most signal service. We observe that a committee has been formed in England to promote a friendly settlement of our differences, and that Mr. THOMAS HUGHES is chairman. It is a pleasant fact which should remind us constantly of that great and influential body of Englishmen who were steadily faithful to us, and whose conduct during the rebellion undoubtedly saved us from a war with England. Let every patriotic American who knows that a war between the countries would be really a ghastly civil war be a committee to help keep an honorable peace. And of that committee may General SCHENCK be chairman.

The country is unquestionably gratified by the appointment of the new minister; but it does not forget that he succeeds a most admirable representative, of whom also the country was proud, and whose recall is still a mystery. We hope that the Administration will yet authorize some simple statement of the reasons which produced dissatisfaction with Mr. MOTLEY. It is certainly personally hard, and most injurious to the public service, that any man should be so publicly humiliated as he has been without any known reason; and it is not a matter which the Administration should leave unexplained.

THE UNITED STATES AND PRUSSIA.

THE protest of the State Department against the action of the German authorities in refusing to allow Mr. WASHBURNE's dispatches to pass from Paris unless they were unsealed is moderate but reasonable. The capital of France being blockaded, and our minister shut up with the French Government, he has not lost his right to communicate with his own Government, which has declared itself to be neutral. To insist that the dispatches be open is to assert that the minister is suspected of violating the neutrality of his Government. But if there is reason for such a suspicion, it should be stated to his Government, and it would be a justification of the refusal, because the Germans are not bound to permit any violation of neutrality which they have reason to suspect. But as no such suspicion has been alleged, it must be assumed that Mr. WASHBURNE's dispatches are honorably neutral, and they should therefore be respected. Secretary FISH very properly remarks that Prussia has been so forward in asserting the rights of neutrals that it is unpleasant to encounter this limitation of the undoubted rights of an independent legation.

It is the more unpleasant because Mr. WASHBURNE assumed the care of the Germans in Paris, and because of the universal and profound sympathy in this country for Germany. It is not impossible that the apparent eagerness of Mr. WASHBURNE to recognize the Committee of Defense as the Government of France, and to express sympathy for the republic—forgetting that there was no republic—may have made the German authorities suspicious that the American minister was really in an unneutral frame of mind. The relief of their doubts would depend very much upon their view of his expressions as representing the sentiments of his Government. And it is certainly a question whether the United States were not hasty in telegraphing to Mr. WASHBURNE on the 6th of September to congratulate the Committee of Defense upon "the successful establishment of a republican government." It was an authority *de facto*—that was all.

It was certainly not a republican government established. The first dispatch of the State Department on the same day was perfectly correct. "If the Provisional Government has the actual control and possession of power, and is acknowledged by the French people, so as to be in point of fact a *de facto* Government," then recognize it.

It is not likely, however, that Germany will care to excite ill feeling in this country, and the Government will therefore probably yield to the representations of our minister at Berlin. Indeed, the sagacity with which the political part of the war has been managed by Germany is hardly less remarkable than the skill of the military operations. What country could have hoped to see such a general as VON MOLTKE supplemented by such a statesman as BISMARCK? The clearness, the good sense, the real reason of the political management have been unsurpassed. In the beginning the German manifest was unanswerable. In all the negotiations with FAVRE and THIERS, BISMARCK has had plainly the best of it in principle and argument. And in all the exterior diplomacy the same thing is evident. The Germans have told the truth about the situation, and it is not the least remarkable circumstance of the war that no reports from the Tours Government, or from French partisans in our own press, have been believed until they were confirmed by German authority. BISMARCK will not alienate the public opinion of the United States.

SAN DOMINGO.

THE President does not relinquish his hope of annexing San Domingo. He made a strong argument for it in his Message, stating the advantages of the acquisition in the most enticing manner, and showing his very sincere conviction that we ought to have the island. Senator SUMNER instantly moved a resolution of the most searching inquiry into the sources of the Presidential statements, while Senator MORTON proposed a commission to go to San Domingo and ascertain facts. In the House, Mr. BANKS proposed a similar commission. The Senate resolution was laid over. That of the House was referred to the Committee upon Foreign Affairs. Meanwhile a protest is preparing in commercial circles against the San Domingo project, upon the ground that it will lead to great frauds and corruptions, and involve a war with the French part of the island, and this at a time when it will be a great misfortune for the country to believe that the war taxes are maintained that new territory may be bought.

The sole practical arguments for the annexation are two: first, that we need a coaling station in the Gulf; second, that if we do not take San Domingo some European power will. But although a coaling station may be convenient, it is, like all other commodities, not desirable at every price. Mrs. Toodles thought that a door-plate was handy to have, and Mr. Sparrowgrass thought the same of many things. But all things have a price, and however handy, the cost must be considered. This principle must be inflexibly applied to the San Domingo bargain; and a war, a debt, and a totally alien population make up a price altogether disproportioned to the conveniences of coaling. As for the advantages of a tropical garden and its productions, we can enjoy them without annexation. It would be a lamentable policy for us to buy or to annex other countries for the sake of what they produce. A generous commercial system will give us the fruits of other lands without the care and expense of raising them. Great territorial size is not necessarily great power or great advantage of any kind; and however desirable increased size may be hereafter, we have certainly time enough to wait. To get a coal station merely, therefore, it is not worth while to pay the immense price which is inevitable.

The intention of European powers to occupy American islands is probably not very pronounced. If there has been any negotiation with reference to the acquisition of San Domingo, we shall presently know it under Senator SUMNER's resolution. But when we have decided that our just interest requires that there shall be no further European colonization upon this continent we can courteously say so, if, upon consideration, it seems to be judicious. At present there seems to be no European power which is likely to undertake the business of American occupation. Spain, the great col-

onizer, is still wrestling to hold the most important of her American possessions, and her general American example is hardly encouraging to other European countries. If it shall appear that there are promising negotiations pending for the cession of San Domingo elsewhere, there will be something to consider. But the alternative is not annexation to the United States. If that were so, there would be no more subtle European policy than the opening of negotiations for outlying territory upon this continent. For upon this theory the result would be its cession to us, and our consequent weakening. It would be a kind of territorial dropsy imposed upon us by crafty Europe.

There is one other argument which is sometimes urged. It is that to annex San Domingo would be to extend the area of freedom. That was the ancient argument of the slaveholders when they drove us at their pleasure. It was alleged in the good old palmy days, for which Copperheads still sigh, that to multiply slavery was to increase liberty. But it was a problem in politico-moral metaphysics to which the country was unequal. As slavery, happily, no longer controls the government, merely to annex other countries is not, as it was then, to spread the curse. But before we undertake to extend the blessings of republican freedom let us strengthen and regulate our own practice of it, so that the process of extension shall not be one of weakening also. To extend a system of political corruption is not serviceable to any citizen nor to any country. Indeed, it may be a question whether we are yet quite prepared to be missionaries. Certainly it is not worth while to begin a peaceful crusade of republicanism by the annexation of semi-barbarous tropical regions. If great reasons of state plainly compel us to tropical annexation, we must, of course, make the best of it. But the reasons must be greater and plainer than they yet appear to be in the San Domingo project.

AMNESTY.

IN his speech defining his position and describing the political situation in Missouri, Senator SCHURZ confirmed the recent statement of our correspondent that the division in that State was not upon the question of revenne reform. It is, nevertheless, true that Mr. GRATZ BROWN expressed himself very strongly upon the subject in every speech that he made; nor is there much doubt that the leaders of the defection are what is called revenue reformers. Senator SCHURZ, however, insists that the party is divided upon the question of amnesty, and that the policy which he and his friends adopted in Missouri upon that subject must become the policy of the party in the country, or it must expect defeat. He declares that general enfranchisement was made the Republican policy upon his motion at the last National Convention, and that it is a political necessity that the Republicans deprive their opponents of that cry before the next Presidential election. But Mr. SCHURZ's resolution in the Convention only recommended universal amnesty as soon as it should be compatible with the public safety, which is an amnesty under very stringent conditions. Until, therefore, the party is persuaded that the amnesty may be wisely granted it is not bound to proclaim it by any previous declaration.

Thus the party is pledged to amnesty only when it appears to be advisable. A man may vote for it or vote against it, and still be a consistent and sincere Republican. The question of its influence upon the party success is the question of the welfare of the country. If the public feeling in favor of an amnesty is so strong that it threatens to make the opposition more menacing, then it is desirable to consider that feeling, because to risk Republican power for the purpose of excluding those who would be enfranchised by a Republican defeat would be unspeakable folly. Permanent disfranchisement is not contemplated, because in a free country it would be a permanent peril. All punishment of great classes of political offenders, indeed, is perilous, but it is a peril that must sometimes be encountered. The time comes, however, when the peril is greater than the profit, and then the punishment must cease.

There is little doubt that the disfranchised class in the Southern States includes many influential persons, and that they are naturally hostile to the government. The true policy toward such persons would seem to be one of reasonable conciliation. And this not so much for themselves as for others. The power for mischief of a man who is made to suffer for what others believe to be honest convictions is much greater than that of the same man without his crown of martyrdom. He may hate as strenuously as before, but he can not so readily persuade others to hate a power which treats him with conspicuous lenity. Mr. WADE HAMPTON is a representative of the kind of Southern leader who, like the old English Jacobites, can not be propitiated. While he is under the ban of the government he is a power among those who believe him to be honest, and to be punished for fidelity to his convictions. But when the ban is removed, the appeals of Mr. WADE HAMPTON against a government which he sought to destroy, yet which forgives him, fall powerless. JEFFERSON DAVIS, wandering about unnoticed, ROBERT E. LEE, ostentatiously mourned, are proofs of a clemency of the government as admirable as its power is indisputable. Indeed, it is only a truly powerful government that can wisely be clement.

The Democrats, of course, favor a general amnesty because they know that Democracy bred rebels, and that the more an ex-rebel hates the government and deplores its victory the surer he is to vote the Democratic ticket. But the Democrats should be a little wary in their choice of arguments. It is not very edifying to hear the late lackeys of slavery urging the principles of Christianity. And certainly nothing would so soon persuade a man to doubt the wisdom of amnesty as to hear the residuary legatees of "the sum of human villainies" quoting the Lord's prayer as an argument for enfranchisement.

GERMANY IN FRANCE.

IT was lately untruly stated that M. GAMBETTA had relinquished hope. The sortie from Paris has failed. The army of the Loire has been divided. General DE PALADINES has been virtually disgraced, and Tours is abandoned. It is to be regretted that the report of M. GAMBETTA's feeling was not correct, and that he has so long chosen to feed France upon lies; for the situation has long been hopeless, and it was neither patriotism nor wisdom to refuse to see it. Nevertheless, if the war were not just what it is, it would always be too soon for a Frenchman to despair. If it were a contest of resistance to oppression, if it were a struggle for independence against a cruel power, if it were a fight for the defense of human rights assailed, or of a true national honor violated, every Frenchman would justly welcome the worst, knowing that the worst of war is not so bad as the best of slavery.

But that is not the situation, and it never has been. The appeal of France to the moral sympathy and support of the world has always failed, because it had no reason. It could not invoke enthusiasm for the republic, because there is no republic; and the very authorities that proclaim it have plainly shrunk from permitting the people to express themselves. It could not protest against invasion, because France had picked a foolish quarrel for the purpose of invading Prussia and making peace at Berlin. It could not plead that the Emperor began the war and it had repudiated the Emperor, because it had adopted his war. When the empire fell at Sedan, the honorable duty of France, if it did not mean war, was to say that the war was the crime of the Emperor, which it declined to share, and that it demanded peace. Then if Germany had offered impossible or evidently dishonorable terms, the war would have continued, and the sympathy of the world might have fallen to France. But, instead of this, the first declaration of M. GAMBETTA and his friends was that France had become a republic, which was an appeal for sympathy under false pretenses. Then they declared that not an inch of territory nor a stone of a fortress should be yielded, which was mere defiance of a victorious enemy. From that moment there has been nothing but a cloud of untruth enveloping the authorities. Brave men there are in France, indeed, and noble women. But there is a canker of universal distrust. And now, when the last hope seems to vanish, when the future of France, in case of the fall of Paris, is absolutely inscrutable, the Committee of Defense insist upon prolonging the misfortune and deepening the humiliation of France.

Had the report of M. GAMBETTA's request of an armistice to allow an election been correct, as it ought to have been, and had the proposition been accepted, what an extraordinary spectacle it would have been! And so it will be unless the French are suddenly and every where victorious. If the war continues to what now seems its probable issue, Germany will occupy France, and by German permission French elections will be held to determine whether Germany shall be asked for peace, and upon what terms it can be obtained. Meanwhile the actual situation of France is inexpressibly sad to imagine. What untold suffering of every kind —what material desolation—what moral ruin! It seems the completion of the old revolution, the revolution "in permanence" since 1789. The old things must utterly pass away if there are to be new things. It is to be hoped that there are men in France who understand that there can be no returning, that the only way out is through, not back. We have yet to see whether there will be a reaction which will only prolong the sorrow of the country, or a resolution which will at last regenerate it.

SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE.

WE are much gratified to hear of the kind reception which the American astronomers have met in London, on their way to Spain and Sicily to observe the eclipse of the sun during the present month. Nothing could be more cordial than the welcome that has been extended to them, the astronomer royal and engineer in charge of the government telegraphs having offered them every facility, while the Athenæum Club, and the clubs of the Royal and Royal Astronomical societies, have made them their guests. They have visited many of the observatories of England for the purpose of making themselves familiar with the general plans and arrangement of the establishments. Professor NEWCOMB, who represents in part the National Observatory expedition, sailed for Gibraltar on the 5th of December with the English eclipse expedition, having been kindly tendered a passage by the government authorities.

Professor NEWCOMB, of the Washington Observatory, visits Europe at the present time not only for the purpose of observing the eclipse, but also to collect from the different observatories old or unpublished records of the position of the moon, to be used in a discussion of the whole subject of the moon's movements, and the improvement of lunar tables. Furthermore, having not long since completed an exhaustive discussion of the planet Neptune (published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1866), the results of which have been adopted in the preparation of the different nautical almanacs, he is now engaged on a similar investigation of Uranus, one object of which is to ascertain whether the perturbations produced by Neptune are sufficient to explain all the irregularities of Uranus, or whether there are residuary phenomena which may indicate the existence of a yet undiscovered planet of the first order, and exterior to Uranus. He hopes to obtain in Europe important data for the investigation in question, as well as for that relative to the moon.

The latest report of the British eclipse expedition is to the effect that the government has, at last, awakened thoroughly to the interest of the occasion, and will render the utmost assistance in its power toward carrying out successfully the wishes of the public. As at present arranged there are to be four parties—one to Cadiz, and another to Gibraltar; another, in the charge of Mr. LOCKYER, accompanies the American expedition; while the fourth, under the charge of Mr. HUGGINS, proceeds to Oran, in Algeria.

It is stated in *Nature* that the British government has granted twenty thousand pounds for observations on the coming transit of Venus.

Mr. HEINE, well known in the United States as the artist who accompanied Commodore PERRY on his Japan expedition, and as connected with other geographical enterprises, lately presented a communication before the British Association in regard to the lines for ship canals across the Isthmus of Panama. After discussing the routes proposed across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Honduras, Nicaragua, and nine lines across the Isthmus of Darien, he came to the conclusion that only two lines were of a kind to deserve consideration. These two lines, according to his statement, are—1. From Aspinwall along the line of the railway to Panama, having an extreme elevation of 269 feet, a length of thirty-five miles, through rocks of porphyry and basalt, and with but middling ports of entry. 2. From the Gulf of Darien through the rivers Atrato, Casarica, Paya, and Tingra, to the Gulf of San Miguel, with an extreme elevation of 186 feet, length fifty-two miles, through a soil composed of alluvial deposit, with some thin ranges of grayish sandstone or schist, and with very good ports of entry.

The survey of the first line was very perfect, that of the second line less so, and a more exact level was desirable. Of the nineteen expeditions undertaken, twelve were of American origin, four were undertaken by Frenchmen, one by a native Colombian, and only two by Englishmen.

Mr. R. M'ANDREW, a well-known English conchologist, has been occupied for a considerable length of time in dredging in the Gulf of Suez, and has obtained no less than 818 species of mollusca. Of these three-fourths have been determined. These specimens show a remarkable difference from the forms belonging to the Mediterranean, and the existence is inferred of a barrier between the two seas from a very remote epoch, although it is thought that the two were united in the eocene and miocene periods.

Among the numerous engineering projects of the present day, few promise to be of more importance in a commercial point of view than the ship canal, eight miles in length, by which it is proposed to connect the head of Buzzard's Bay with Barnstable Bay, across Cape Cod. It is believed that when this is completed a very large proportion of the shipping that now follows round the outside of Cape Cod, encountering the perils of the Nantucket Shoals and other impediments to safe navigation, will make a direct course through Buzzard's Bay; and thereby, while greatly shortening the time necessary for the passage, will accomplish it at much less risk of loss or detention, as well as at a reduced rate of insurance.

The feasibility of this project has been demonstrated, it is said, by careful surveys of the approaches to the proposed canal, while the nature of the ground to be traversed is also favorable for the purpose. A company has been organized for the purpose in question, and it is expected that the canal can be excavated to a depth of twenty-seven feet, and of sufficient width, at an expense of about $7,000,000. A bill has just been introduced into Congress to provide for the construction, by the general government, of a breakwater and harbor of refuge off Barnstable Bay, at a cost not to exceed $2,000,000. The bill provides for the reimbursement to the government by the company of all the expense incurred should any failure occur in the completion of the canal itself.

In this connection we may also refer to the renewal of the project, proposed by TELFORD many years ago, for a ship canal across the counties of Devon and Somersetshire, England, to shorten the sea passage between the Bristol and English channels. The proposed canal is to be twenty-one feet deep, and fifty-nine miles long, and will cost about $17,000,000. The freights on this canal, when finished, will probably consist principally of coal.

A memorial has lately been presented by the Royal Irish Academy to Earl Granville, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, calling his attention to the irreparable loss which would be sustained by the whole civilized world should the invaluable scientific, literary, and other collections of Paris be destroyed or seriously injured during the siege. As the city contains galleries stored with treasures of art, rich libraries, and scientific museums of the first rank, representing the accumulated labors of many generations, they are to be considered as the property not merely of France, but of the whole world, many of the articles contained in them being irreplaceable should they be once destroyed. The fate of the library of Strasburg shows that there is real danger to the Paris collections from the military operations; and in view of the facts adduced the petitioners, as members of a scientific body, protest against the destruction of these collections, and respectfully call upon her Majesty's government to use the utmost efforts for their preservation by impressing upon the belligerents the duty of taking every possible precaution for their protection from the dangers to which they are likely to be exposed.

Allusions have lately been made in the public papers to the discovery of a silver mine on an isolated rock in Lake Superior, which is being worked under the protection of a coffer-dam. According to Mr. DUBOIS, of the United States Mint, this ore becomes richer with the increasing depth, and is now yielding at the rate of $13,000 a ton.

The contractor for the cable to extend along the west side of South America writes encouragingly as to the success of the enterprise, and states that a rival line, which was expected to interfere with his plans, has agreed to yield the route from Payta to Pisco for the European telegrams, so that there will be probably only one line between Valparaiso and Panama.

The Panama Railroad Company, in view of the increase of its trade with the Central American states, has recently increased its steamship service on the west coast from two to three vessels monthly, leaving Panama on the 10th, 15th, and 25th; and returning on the 10th, 15th, and 30th.

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

CONGRESS.

December 12.—In the Senate, a resolution was offered by General Schurz in favor of the removal of political disabilities. Its consideration was postponed. Mr. Morton offered a resolution, which was ordered to lie on the table, authorizing the President to appoint a commission to visit San Domingo to gather information regarding the island, and report the same to the President.—In the House, General Logan introduced a bill for the abolition of the grades of admiral and vice-admiral in the navy. After a very sharp debate the bill was passed. A resolution was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, authorizing the appointment of a commission to inquire into the expediency of negotiating for the acquisition of San Domingo. A resolution in favor of the abolition of the present revenue system as soon as consistent with the credit of the government was adopted by a vote of 164 to 6.

December 13.—In the Senate, Mr. M'Creery asked leave, which was refused, to introduce a resolution looking to the removal of the Union dead from Arlington, and the restitution of the estate to the family of the late General Lee. He delivered a glowing eulogy on the character of the deceased, classing him with Hampden and Sidney "upon the list of martyrs in the sacred cause of right."—In the House, the bill for the revision of the postal laws was taken up, and the debate continued on the amendment abolishing the franking privilege. An amendment to this, allowing the free exchange of newspapers and periodicals, was adopted, and the original amendment then passed by a vote of 103 to 65. A proposition to reduce postage on letters to two cents was rejected, and after some further changes in details the whole bill passed without a division.

December 14.—In the Senate, resolutions were adopted instituting searching investigations into the cost of collecting the customs revenue of the country, and the amount of money received and paid out at the several custom-houses.—In the House, the greater part of the day was spent in discussing the question of holding a great international exhibition on the one hundredth anniversary of our national independence, and in considering the General Amnesty bill. Nothing conclusive was done with either.

December 15.—In the Senate, the greater part of the day was taken up by General Schurz, who made a speech in favor of his resolution looking to the removal of political disabilities. He gave an account of the recent canvass in Missouri, and defended the action of himself and his associates in dividing the Republican party there. He declared himself still an adherent of that party and a supporter of the administration, and expressed the hope that the Republicans would yet form the party of the future.—In the House, the debate on General Butler's Amnesty bill was continued, the speeches being mostly in opposition.

December 16.—In the Senate, the resolution of General Schurz for a general amnesty was taken up, and Mr. Drake made a strong speech in opposition.—In the House, a bill was introduced and referred to the Committee on Commerce to encourage ship-owning and ship-building by admitting to American registry ships over 2000 tons burden, wherever built, and to admit, free of duty, ship-building and engine materials for ships of over 2000 tons, the latter to be admitted to the coasting trade, but not the former.

GENERAL DOMESTIC ITEMS.

The British minister in Washington has received $5000 for the widows and orphans of the crew of the *Oneida*, contributed by English subscribers.

Governor Holden of North Carolina has been impeached by the State House of Representatives, and will be put upon trial at once.

C. C. Bowen, representative in Congress from South Carolina, has been indicted in Washington for bigamy. An Indiana divorce is to be produced in his defense.

The Indian Council at Ocmulgee, Indian Territory, was organized on the 11th inst. The chief subject of debate was a scheme to organize a Territorial government embracing all the tribes. The plan is in conformity with all the laws of Congress since 1866, and contemplates the protection of the weak tribes against the strong, and is only to be executed with the consent of all.

FOREIGN NEWS.

THE reports from the army of the Loire are conflicting. From French sources we have positive statements of victories, and from Prussian sources equally positive statements that the army of Prince Frederick Charles is steadily pushing back the French along their entire line.

The free branch of the French government has established itself at Bordeaux.

It is stated that the delay in the opening of the bombardment of Paris is occasioned by a lack of ammunition, and that the roads are so wet and heavy that none can be brought forward at present.

Montmédy and Pfalsburg, in the northeast of France, have been surrendered to the Prussians. The latter was occupied on the 13th inst.

Baden has ratified the treaty of annexation to the German Confederation.

The Russian forces are concentrating on the Turkish frontier, and further annulments of the Treaty of Paris are asked by the Russian embassador in Constantinople. Great Britain is said to be preparing against a surprise.

THE ENTENTE CORDIALE—THE PRUSSIAN BUGBEAR IN THE PARK OF VERSAILLES.

SELLING FISH AT AUCTION IN PARIS.—[See Page 859.]

ALEXANDRE DAVY DUMAS.

THIS celebrated French dramatist and novelist, who died recently at Dieppe, was the son of General ALEXANDRE DAVY DUMAS, a soldier of distinction under the empire. He was born in Villers-Cotterets, July 24, 1803. His grandmother, on the father's side, was an African negro girl, and the characteristic features of the mulatto were presented in his thick lips and crisp, curly hair, though not in his complexion, which was white. He lost his father when about three years old, and was left very nearly to his own guidance in growing up. His education was consequently defective, and at the age of eighteen he seems to have learned little except to ride, fence, play billiards, and write a good hand. To the last accomplishment he owed his first position—that of copying clerk in the office of the secretary of the Duke of Orleans, afterward LOUIS PHILIPPE. This was the first stepping-stone in a long and successful career.

As an author, the popularity of DUMAS rivaled that of DICKENS, and was not confined to France. He not only wrote with extraordinary facility, but employed a corps of assistants to fill up the details of plots which he furnished in outline. It is said he could dash off a play faster than three expert penmen could copy it. Previous to 1848 his pen procured him an income of 60,000 francs a year. In skillfulness of arrangement, vivacity of narrative and style, and fertility of invention, his novels surpass those of most of his contemporaries; but their moral effect is not elevating. The translations of his principal works have attained a wide circulation in this country, the most popular being the "Count of Monte Cristo," the "Three Guardsmen," "Twenty Years After," "Margaret of Anjou," and the "Memoirs of a Physician."

THE LATE ALEXANDRE DAVY DUMAS.

GURNEY & CO. AT HOME.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

In Two Parts.—Part I.

JOHN GURNEY MUSING.

GURNEY PLACE.

IT is twenty miles from the city, and three miles inland on the north side of the old road running from river to river. It is shut off from the road by a stone wall, surmounted in the olden time by iron spikes, which have long since rusted away. In the middle of this wall there is a large gate which opens on a circular drive, cut into ruts and littered with leaves. This drive is bordered by a hedge, which, no longer trimmed, thrusts its rugged limbs whither it will, greatly to the peril of flounces and long skirts, whenever such frivolities are at Gurney Place, which is not often. Thirty years ago the grounds were famous, and not without reason, for whatever money could do to make them beautiful it had done. The situation was perfect, and the taste which had embellished it was faultless. Wherever a grove should have been, there was the grove; and wherever a walk should have been, there was the walk. But the glory of Gurney Place, to my mind, is the great avenue of pines on the east of the house. It is carpeted with red needles, which slip, slip under the feet, and emit a faint fragrance, half of the balsamic branches from which they have fallen, and half of the rich earth into which they are mouldering. At the end of this stately avenue there is a rustic summer-house, perched on the edge of a slope leading to a lake, around which is a gravel path, edged, on the water side, with long rushes. Moored to a mimic pier is the remains of a tiny pleasure-boat, in which young people once rowed about and gathered lilies. The sun has blistered and bleached it, and a turtle, left in it years ago, has reared her progeny on its leaky bottom. It is a lonesome place, this dreary little sheet of water, which scarcely ripples in the wind, and which drinks the light, as some men do wine, growing gloomier every moment. Every thing is gloomy at Gurney Place—every thing but the avenue of pines, which is grand, and the conservatory, which is beautiful the year through with rare flowers and plants. These are the only portions of the grounds which John Gurney loves, and, happen what may, these are always cared for. Of Gurney House he thinks but little, though others find it comfortable enough. It is an odd-looking mansion, the general effect of which is ugly, though it is not without redeeming points. It is large, to begin with, and solidly built—a brick structure, with stone corners and wings at each end, projecting upon the curves of the drive. The sun shines into the windows of these wings all day—through the right wing in the forenoon, and through the left wing in the afternoon—but the rest of the house sleeps in a half light, the shadows of a row of elms and the shadow of the long colonnade in front. There are small doors in the ends of the wings, and a large, double door in the middle of the colonnade, opening, when it opens, on a broad hall paved with lozenge-shaped tiles. Each side of the hall there is a dark parlor, with windows reaching to the floor, and a high ceiling painted in fresco. The chimneys are large and deep, set in frames of carved oak under high narrow mantels, on the ends of which are silver candlesticks and pairs of silver snuffers on silver trays. For the furniture (if you have a taste that way), it would make the fortune of Marley, it is so massive and unique. There is no such mahogany now as John Gurney's, which is dark with age—transparently dark in its old polish, and as perfect as if it had just been sent home by its maker, who has been dead a hundred years. There are heavy sofas of it, stuffed with black haircloth, and chairs of the same with harp-backs, and more card-tables with claw legs than would be considered reputable now in a well-regulated country seat. Upon large buffets are decanters of noble size, sacred of yore to the generous juices of Spain and Portugal, with silver chains round their necks labeled "Madeira" and "Port." The floors are covered with Turkey carpets, costly in their time, and ugly at any time—disagreeable to the eye, but as soft to the foot as beds of forest moss. The parlors of Gurney House are like most parlors in the country—cold, forbidding, inhospitable. It is enough to be shown into their eternal twilight; to live there would be intolerable.

The wings are more habitable, especially the left wing, which John Gurney has fitted up as a library, and in which he spends most of his time when at home. It is a cozy, comfortable room, with a bay-window facing the western sky, and a bright carpet, whose green vines and red berries are suggestive of endless summer. Around the walls are dwarf book-cases, on which are ranged specimens of old china, curious vases of fantastic patterns, bottles with long necks around which lizards are creeping, cups and saucers thin as egg-shells, puzzles in ivory, and boxes in jade-stone; and the effigies of squat little men, with corpulent bellies and stiff pig-tails — oracular old blockheads who were famous for knowing nothing in the fabulous dynasty of Chang. Shells are strewn, tier over tier, in bamboo cabinets, and embroidered screens stand in the corners and before the fire-place, which still retains its ancient lattice fender, its tall shovel and tongs, and its high brass andirons, in which John Gurney used to distort his face when a boy.

He was past such follies now—a man of sixty, with gray hair beginning to thin, and crow's-feet at the corners of his blue eyes, cold and hard as agates—past all follies, he would have told you a few years since, and convinced you of it, too. But not a year ago last summer, when he lay for weeks in his chamber up stairs, silent, pale, troubled, with the shadow of death on his face; nor when the days that witnessed his recovery had borne him along to winter. He sat alone in the library one day in December. It was a dim, dull afternoon, with a leaden sky, a rustle of wind in the leaves, and a threat of rain speedily—an afternoon which could only be brightened by a wood-fire and the light of happy memories. John Gurney had the blaze of the wood-fire as he leaned back in his easy-chair, but he had not the happy memories. He had been thinking, and was not satisfied with himself. Happy the man who is! But no such man exists, who can remember and feel. John Gurney could do both, and he was a hard man. So the world said, and he did not contradict it. It was a fact to him, but a fact of which he was no longer proud. He had been thinking, you see—thinking of his father and mother, who were dead, of his sisters, who were living, he supposed, and of himself—a cold, stern, implacable, disappointed man.

His father had died thirty years before, and left him the master of Gurney Place and the head of the house of Gurney & Co. It was an old firm and a wealthy, with connections the world over, but more largely than elsewhere in China and India. What merchandise passed through its hands I am not clerkly enough to state, but I suppose pagodas and rupees—I mean teas, silks, and mattings. The elder Gurney was a man of business, the younger Gurney was a merchant. He loved money, not for what it is—dross, but for what it can be—power. He was fond of power, and never scrupled to use it; his enemies said to abuse it, I venture to think, wrongly. If he was strict in his dealings, he was just. He meant to be just always. That he had been so he began to doubt. It was certain, he admitted, that he had not been generous. Wherein had he failed?

He had two sisters, as I have hinted, of whom he was left the guardian by his father, who left them nothing in his will except his last blessing and what their brother might bestow upon them out of his love and regard. The elder, Judith, was an elderly lady of fourteen, the younger, Ann, was a little girl of nine. He educated them as if they had been his daughters, this stalwart bachelor of thirty, taking, so far as he could, their dead father's place, and demanding respect and obedience. They were well brought up, at least Judith was, for Ann neglected her books, her music, and her dancing. She was like her mother, a wee woman, with appealing black eyes that could be evasive when they would; and, like her mother, she was obstinate and determined in a quiet way. Judith was an out-and-out Gurney, a tall blonde, with flaxen hair, humid blue eyes, and the cunning of a veteran diplomatist. John Gurney made up his mind that they should marry well. He married Judith to money, as he supposed, and the match turned out badly. Ann married herself to nothing, as she knew, and the match turned out worse. One was now Mrs. Hugh Trevor, of Burlington Row; the other was Mrs. Ann Gannett, of Heaven knows where. Ten years had passed since brother John had seen sister Judith; he had not seen sister Ann since her marriage, over twenty years ago. Was it well for relatives to be so estranged?

He woke that morning, earlier than usual, from a restless sleep and confused dreams. He was in a strange house, in a strange place, a boy in a nankeen suit trying in vain to amuse himself. He clambered up a chair and stared at the paper on the walls, which was divided into panels wherein huntsmen, with horns slung about their waists, were leaping over hedges in chase of a fox always the same distance ahead. A low fire-place was set round with painted tiles, whereon were men with long beards, and women in curious robes. A damsel was standing at a well, holding a pitcher to the lips of a thirsty traveler, who had journeyed thither on a camel, and who held a bracelet concealed behind his back. A ram was entangled in a thicket, near which an old man with a long knife stooped above a kneeling lad. Another lad crouched in a pit, on the edge of which was a band of men, one holding a coat of many colors. Who were these people, and what were they doing? The boy soon tired of them, and crept up stairs, where he saw a lady walking to and fro with a sick baby. It cried, and cried, and was still. Standing with others in a church-yard beside a grave, into which a little coffin was being lowered, he woke suddenly in the act of tearing away from his father's hand.

It was late when John Gurney made his appearance at the breakfast-table, and he was haggard and pale. He sat down mechanically, while the old housekeeper, Martha, poured out a cup of coffee for him. Would he have an egg? No, he thanked her. So she left him to himself. The coffee was weak, the toast was cold; he had no appetite. He leaned his head on his hand, and thought of the many mornings he had breakfasted there in the same solitary, dismal fashion; and the many, many mornings he had breakfasted there with his family. He shut his eyes and saw them as of old—his father seated where he was sitting, a cheerful, hearty man; his mother opposite, smiling over the coffee-urn and the cream-jug; his sisters on her right and left—Judith with flaxen ringlets, and Ann with wavy black hair; and last, himself, young John Gurney, handsome, vigorous, alert. They chatted together, he and his father, of the weather, the crops, the new horses, while his mother prattled in her light way, telling Judith that she was looking prettily, which she was, and Ann that she was a little fright, which she wasn't at all. This was thirty-five years ago, and what a dream to John Gurney, as he opened his eyes, and found himself alone, an oldish man, with a bad liver, and a worse heart! Bah! He rang the bell, and Martha reappearing, he asked her to tell Tom to harness up, for he was going to the city.

"YOU REFUSE TO RECEIVE YOUR DAUGHTER?"

He must get away from Gurney Place, or from himself.

The carry-all was led up to the door, and he stepped in beside his man, Tom Watkins, whose business it was to drive him to and from the dépôt and the pier.

"Which way this morning, Sir?"

"To the pier."

He spoke so impatiently that Tom gave the horse a sharp cut with the whip, and cast a furtive glance in his master's face. "Something has gone wrong," he thought; "maybe his breakfast; any how, I won't mind him. How old he looks!" And then, aloud,

"'As runs the glass
Man's life doth pass.'"

"And you're an ass" (he spoke testily), "with your Catechism, and your 'Poor Richard.' I hate proverbs."

"I love 'em" (defiantly); "they are the sayings of the wise."

"Of fools; for the wise are not always sneering."

"Ain't they, though? What do you make of King Solomon?"

But John Gurney made nothing of King Solomon; for, if he heard, he did not answer. He was in a brown-study. "How ill he looks!" thought Tom. And he added, this time to himself,

"'Here to-day and gone to-morrow;
This is the end of human sorrow.'"

What was John Gurney thinking of? I doubt whether he could have told, he was thinking of so many people, among others of a certain Richard Gannett, who once sailed as a mate for Gurney & Co., and who stole away the heart of sister Ann when she was a mere child. A young fellow of twenty-four, or thereabout, he was invited to Gurney Place to dine—an unusual honor for any one in the employ of Gurney & Co. He was a little awed at first by the splendor of the dinner—a circumstance which raised him in the estimation of John Gurney; but the conversation turning on the sea, he was soon at home. He was a good sailor, and he showed it in a modest, manly fashion, which John Gurney thought well of, and which Ann Gurney thought better of. They walked, after dinner, in the twilight, John and Judith to the conservatory, and herself and Mr. Gannett to the summer-house by the lake. When they parted at the door at dusk—he to return to the city, and she to sew a while by candle-light—she was in love with the young mate. If he was in love with her, he kept it to himself, as was proper for a person in his condition of life. This drifted through John Gurney's mind as he was driven to the pier, and it made him uncomfortable. He had liked Richard Gannett as a mate, but when, two years later, Captain Gannett married his sister without his consent, he hated him. He would not see him, and he would not see his wife, who in four years was a widow with two children. "She has made her bed, and must lie in it."

He spoke aloud, to his own surprise.

"There is but one bed where we lie quietly, and that is not the marriage bed," Tom remarked, grimly, and gave the horse another cut with the whip. They came in sight of the pier just in time to see the boat moving away.

"Turn round and drive back; I shall not go to the city to-day."

"Looks like it," Tom muttered.

"'But who can tell, when the arrow is shot,
Whether 'twill hit the mark or not.'"

John Gurney alighted from the carry-all at the door, and, summoning Martha to have a fire built in the library, wandered up and down the grounds, noting this and that absently. The mortar was crumbling out of the wall; the box was heaped with leaves; the currant-bushes were dead. Cones were beginning to cumber the pine walk; he must see Tom Watkins about that; and, stooping stiffly, he picked one up and tossed it into the lake. The sun glinted coldly from the white sky; the air was chill and damp, like the air of a vault. Dead leaves rattled under him; dead leaves dropped around him:

"And when a leaf fa's i' my lap,
I'll ca' 't a word frae thee."

Was John Gurney in his dotage that he should hum an old song? or was he recalling a fair young girl who sang it to him one moonlight night, how many years ago? We shall look, perhaps, into some of the chambers of his heart, but there is one into which we must not look. Every man has his secret, and this is John Gurney's. He buttoned up his coat with a shiver, and hurried into the house.

He left it no more that day, but shut himself up in the library, where a chop was sent to him at noon, where he smoked cigars and drank brandy, and where he persuaded himself that he was reading and writing. He commenced a letter, but, dropping his pen a moment to look out of the window, he forgot all about it. He cut the pages of a review as far as the contents; they were not attractive. He took up a novel, but soon threw it down as "stuff." Then he went to his book-shelves, and returned—you would never guess with what—an armful of the English poets. That he loved poetry, as he did, is a fact for which I can no more account than for the Edelweiss in the Alps, and the presence in its frozen neighborhood of swarms of tiny butterflies. It was in him, as love, I suppose, was in him once, and as self-accusation was in him now. What he sought in the poets was not their happy inspirations; not such divine little songs as stud the old dramatists, nor such gleams of spring and summer as light the pages of Chaucer and Spenser; but grave and solemn pieces, like Milton's "Lycedas," Bishop King's "Exequy," and Gray's "Elegy." The death of lovers, the parting of friends, the shadow that will never be lifted from mortality.

He smoked, and read:

"Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy dwells in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain:
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spoke words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining;
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder:
A dreary sea now flows between;
But neither heat nor frost nor thunder
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been."

Surely this was sad enough for John Gurney. He seemed to think so, for he shut the book hastily, and read no more. He rose, stirred the coals, put on fresh wood, and, drawing the decanter of brandy toward him, sat down again. It was not his habit to drink brandy, but there are days when it does one good. So he thought, or he would not have drunk it. It did him no good, however, to-day; laid no ghost which haunted him, lulled him into no happy reverie. It did not warm his blood, even, for he huddled over the fire with his feet on the fender. He watched the blaze as it flickered up the chimney, thrusting its long arms hither and thither, flickering on the andirons and the hearth-rug; and out of the light and the shadow a picture was shaped in his mind, distant and vague as a dream, but too near and painful not to be a reality. He saw a vessel sailing out of a harbor on a winter morning, a trim brig, with sails all a-taut, and a man at the stern kissing his hand to a woman on the wharf, who was crying and waving her handkerchief. Northward sped the brig, with a stiff breeze; the land dropped behind it, the sea rose before it—the wild, dark sea, where the billows were tossing and tossing, where the sun shone fitfully, where the moon glimmered, where danger and death waited. On, on, day after day, with the waters dashing against the bow; on, on, night after night, with a light on the wake from the window in the stern, the window of the captain's cabin. He is on deck one night—the captain is—one dark and bitter night. The wind screams through the rigging, the sails strain, the air grows colder and colder. What are they driving on so fast—a steep, mountainous coast? Or what is driving so fast on them? An iceberg! It topples suddenly, and crushes the brig! A chill strikes John Gurney, as if a spirit stood beside him.

"Poor Dick Gannett!"

The brands fell, and in their embers John Gurney fancied he saw an old house in a sea-port town—a quaint little house, one story on the road, and two stories on the water; a narrow arm of the sea pushed up into the town at the foot of a hill covered with grave-stones. In a room of this house (of which he seemed to have heard once upon a time) sat a woman rocking a cradle, and hushing a child at her breast. He was touched with pity toward her; she was so young, so worn, so wobegone. She was dressed in black, and was weeping.

"*Poor little Ann!*"

A tear stole to his eye; it was not brushed away.

The sun had set; the wind sighed; there was a patter of rain.

He rang for the candles, and they were brought by his housekeeper, Martha.

"Set them on the table and take a seat, Mrs. Watkins."

She drew a chair from the corner.

"There, where I can see you."

She sat where he pointed—a pleasant-looking old lady, with bright eyes, a cheek like a winter apple, and a string of large gold beads on her neck.

"It occurs to me, Mrs. Watkins, that you lost a son years ago with Captain Gannett. Am I right?"

He was right, she remarked, sadly.

"I did not mean to pain you, but I have an object in view."

"I am waiting to learn it, Sir."

"Do you know any thing of Mrs. Gannett?"

"Mrs. Gannett!"

"My sister; do you know if she is alive?"

"She was when I last heard—"

"Of her, or from her, Mrs. Watkins?" and he frowned. "You are evasive, and I hate evasion. A plain question demands a plain answer. Where does Mrs. Gannett live?"

She hesitated. Should she tell him that she had seen his sister a few days before, and had had a woman's talk with her about herself and her children, and about her own dear, wild boy, at the bottom of the sea? What would he say?

"Don't tell your first lie now, old lady."

Did John Gurney say that, or was it her own heart?

She flamed out at once.

"Mr. Gurney, your sister is an angel."

"And I am a brute; I know all that."

"Do see her, Sir—do—do."

He smiled; he had a good hand, and he played it.

"You won't let me, for you don't tell me where she lives."

She fumbled hastily in her pocket, and produced a bit of crumpled paper, which she gave him with a wistful face.

He read the direction and returned it.

"Thank you, Martha, thank you!" He added in a moment, "Send Tom to me."

She brought Tom, to whom she had whispered what had passed.

"Harness up early to-morrow; I am going to town."

"You were going to-day" (maliciously).

"Supper, supper, Mrs. Watkins; I am growing hungry."

She bustled out.

"Have a glass of brandy, Tom?"

Tom would, and did.

"'When the cat's away
The mice play.'

"Yes, Sir; what the colt learns in youth he continues in old age."

John Gurney went to bed that night a happier man than he had been for years. The wind moaned, the rain poured, but he slept. His shutter banged—he did not hear it; there were great peals of thunder—they did not waken him. He slept soundly, like a man who is too tired to dream, or like a child who dreams only of glorious and gracious things. The rain wakened Tom Watkins, who thought of the horses in the leaky stable, shivering in the wet: he dozed off again. The thunder wakened Martha Watkins, who thought of a storm at sea, and of the ship that went down with her Isaiah: she dozed off again. At last they slept. Every body slept at Gurney Place.

THE TREVORS.

It was Wednesday, and Mrs. Hugh Trevor was "at home." She had been "at home" in past years on every day in the week except Sunday. On Sunday she was "at church." She thought herself religious; her friends called her worldly; perhaps both were right. She certainly loved money, and the fine things that money will buy. But this was to have been expected; first, because she had married for it, and second, because she was a Gurney. She was young-looking in spite of her forty odd years, but whether her delicate bloom was natural or was the effect of art even her enemies could not determine. There was no doubt about her hair, which her dearest friends coveted, and which she was bold enough to wear in the way that was most becoming to her; not bundled over the hideous Ethiopic chignon, but cut short round her forehead, as was the fashion in the days of Charles the Second, and flowing down her neck like crinkled sunlight. Her eyes were lustrous as the eyes of a child, but a close inspection showed that Time had drawn the lines of his intrenchments against their corners.

Mrs. Trevor was in her own room, putting the last touches to her toilet, when a card was brought to her.

"MR. JOHN GURNEY."

She started at the name, as she would not have started in company.

"What in the world!" Careful and elegant in her language generally, she thought in the vernacular, as most of us do, and spoke accordingly. Then she remembered herself, and said to the servant, blandly, "Show the gentleman into the parlor—the back parlor—and say I will be down presently"

"John *here*, to see *me*; what *does* it mean?"

If she was amazed, and for a moment agitated, it is not to be wondered at, considering that she had not seen her brother for ten years, and that when she saw him last he refused to have any thing more to do with her and hers. He may have had reason for what he did; of that, of course, she was no fair judge then, and was no fair judge now. It was, as she remembered it, a trifle of ten thousand dollars, out of which her brother said he had been swindled by her husband, and it was the last money out of which he would be swindled by any of the Trevors. "What shall I say to him?" she said, as she posed herself becomingly before the mirror.

John Gurney said substantially the same thing to himself as he was shown into the parlor. If he had been asked what he meant to say and do on this occasion in his library at Gurney Place, he could have answered glibly enough; but now he had no words with which to express his intentions, and no intentions, so far as he knew, except to see his sister and have a talk with her. Had he forgotten the resolves he made over-night, or was he remembering his last pecuniary transaction with Hugh Trevor? He could no more tell than I can; he only felt that he was embarrassed, and that his old hardness was returning. It commenced when he came in sight of Burlington Row, which was too aristocratic a location, he reasoned, for the Trevors to live in. "But what do you know of them now?" his heart argued; "they may be successful enough to justify it." His head would not admit that. "Besides, if they are, it would be better for them not to do it, since they have children to bring up, and, I dare say, bring them up to do nothing." He was old-fashioned, you see, and had the old-fashioned way of looking at things. He shook his head doubtfully, and rang the bell. When it was answered, he was not encouraged by the richness of the reception-room, fitted up with carved oak furniture, and he was still less encouraged by the splendor of the parlor. He was buttoning up his coat when his sister entered.

Neither spoke, but stood as they were when the door opened, he by the mantel, with his back to the fire, she in the doorway, with her face turned toward him. They gazed at each other sharply. If either was moved, neither showed it. "She wears well;" "He can't last much longer," were their mental comments.

He made an effort, as became him and his good resolves, and extended his hand.

"Good-morning, Judith."

"Good-morning, John."

The ice was broken, but the tide of conversation did not flow yet. Which should begin, and with what? Women are cleverer than men in these embarrassments.

"What brings you to town?"

"What brings me here, you mean. Suppose I say—you?"

"Then I say, 'Thank you, John.'" And she courtesied as she used to do when a girl.

He was amused by this little touch of nature (or art), and said, more kindly,

"Judith, I wanted to see you."

"Not more than I wanted to see you. You may have been right, John, in being so angry with Hugh; but was it right to be angry with me?"

As he had already decided that question against himself, he replied, "Suppose we let by-gones be by-gones?"

"With all my heart. And now tell me about yourself. Have you been well?"

"I was ill last summer. Did you not hear of it?"

"Not a word."

Oh, Mrs. Trevor! You know you read it one morning in your favorite journal, *The Tickler and Tattler*, and you know your husband told you of it when he came home at night. Moreover, your son Percy rode up to Gurney Place to see what he could pump out of Tom Watkins.

"How are your children, Judith? for I need not ask how you are—I see you are well and blooming. There are four, I think?"

"Only three living." And she put her handkerchief to her misty eyes.

"'Friend after friend departs:
Who has not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
That hath not here an end.'"

Then, recovering herself, she continued, "John has been to college. He was named after you—John Gurney Trevor. Percy is in business with his father, and Elizabeth is married. You must have heard of her marriage."

"Yes, I think I heard of that," he answered, dryly. "She threw herself away on a Russian count, or a Spanish grandee, or a—"

"Nothing of the sort. He is an English nobleman, Lord Onslow. She is Lady Onslow. I am a happy mother to have married my daughter so well. Don't you agree with me?"

"Yes, if she *is* well married. But was there not some discussion at the time whether there *was* a Lord Onslow?"

"His lordship's enemies tried to spread such a report, but he satisfied me that it was false."

"By Debrett or Burke?"

"By a letter from his solicitors in London."

"What a fool Judith is!" was the reflection of John Gurney. "And I used to think her clever!" Then aloud, "Are his lordship and her ladyship in town? If so, you must present me."

The touch of sarcasm in his voice did not escape her. She answered, stiffly, "They are now on their bridal tour. When they return they will depart for England, to reside on his lordship's estates."

"In the Isle of Skye, probably," he muttered to himself.

"You don't seem to be pleased, John. Have you changed your mind in regard to the desirability of wealthy marriages?" There was a touch of sarcasm in her voice now.

"Judith, I hope the poor girl is married as you say. But the longer I live—you will be surprised to hear this from me—the longer I live the less I think of money."

"I am delighted to hear it," she said to herself, building I know not what castles in Spain on that unguarded remark. "Money has its advantages, though," she observed, quietly; "at least to people in moderate circumstances."

"Like yourself, for example? You seem rather prosperous, however."

"You must not trust too much to appearances, John."

"No?" he asked.

She bit her lips, feeling that she had committed a blunder. To retrieve it she opened her album, and showed him a *carte de visite* in it. "This is Elizabeth."

He looked at it attentively. "Is it like? She is beautiful—even more beautiful than you were at her age."

"Thank you, brother," and she kissed her hand to him in a pretty way.

"And this?" as he went on turning the leaves.

"That is John. I'm afraid John don't amount to much."

"Johns never do. I like this one, though; he has a frank, manly face. And this?" pointing to another.

"That is Percy," she replied, admiringly. "What do you think of him?"

He gazed and gazed at the face, holding it in different lights.

"Well?"

"I am studying it," and he walked to the window in order to see it more distinctly. It was the face of a boy almost, but there was no boyishness in it. A curious face, with a tender mouth, serious eyes, and an intellectual brow. You would have said, "Here is a staid, decorous, young man, who will command the respect of his elders, and rise in the world as surely as the sun to-morrow." So did not John Gurney, who doubted the more he studied. "I can't make it out. Tell me about him."

She grew voluble at once. "He's a boy in a million. I call him a boy, he is still so young; but he's ten times the man his father is. He's the life and soul of the concern, and whatever he undertakes he succeeds in. 'Gurney & Co.' (the firm is the same, I suppose?) must know the reputation of 'Trevor & Son.' You ought to bank with us."

"Yes?"

"Not that it matters," she added, quickly. "But, as I was saying, Percy is a remarkable young man. I don't know where we should be if it were not for him. He has been in the firm only a year, and you see where we are now. It's comfortable here, isn't it, brother?"

"It's magnificent."

"Percy did it."

"May I inquire how?"

"By a 'corner in Erie,' if that is what you men call it," innocently.

"There are 'corners in Erie,' I believe, and

some very sharp ones. But, forgive me, Judith"—he paused gravely—"forgive me if I do not trust entirely to appearances. A plain business man, I doubt the substantiality of these sudden fortunes. This house, for instance—I fear it is mortgaged."

He seemed to expect her to answer, and it was evident to her that she *should* answer—but how? If she said the house was mortgaged, their prosperity would not appear so real as she wished; and if she said it was not mortgaged, it would appear too real. She was in a dilemma.

"There was a small mortgage on it at first, but I believe it has been taken up. I'll learn, since you wish to know. You are very, very kind. But tell me now of yourself; for, selfish woman that I am, I have babbled all this while of my own poor affairs. You are well, I hope; better even than you look, and as busy, of course, as of old. The firm of 'Gurney & Co.,' Percy says, is the synonym of success. By-the-by, I forgot to mention that Percy, who has not seen you since he was seven, remembers you more distinctly than John. Percy is the only one in the family who will never hear a word against 'Uncle John.' We abuse you, then? Of course we do, and roundly; for, if we can't abuse our relations, whom can we abuse, pray? But Percy won't allow it. 'Uncle John was kind to us once,' he says, 'and if he has dropped us now, it is our own fault.' You must like Percy, brother."

Mrs. Trevor! Mrs. Trevor! you know that Percy never said any thing of the kind. What he *did* say was, "He was useful to us once, and may be again." How can you fib so?

"'Gurney & Co.,' Judith, jog on quietly. Never a fast firm, we are growing slow as we grow old. The house, I suppose, will die with me."

"Why need it? Why not take a partner?"

"We are not rich enough to tempt a young man, and as for old men, one is surely enough."

"Is he telling the truth when he says he is not rich?" she wondered; "or does he think I was about to recommend Hugh to him again?" She tapped him with her fan. "If your remark about old men had any reference to Trevor, you are right; but he was not in my mind when I spoke, I assure you. It seemed to me a pity that so old a house as ours should go down. But so it is, so it is. We must all go. John, do you ever think seriously? Of the grave, I mean, and hereafter? Do you remember the hymn mother taught us when we were children?

"'The day is past and gone,
The evening shades appear;
Oh, may we all remember well
The night of death draws near.'"

"Yes, Judith; and, strange to say, it came into my head the last thing last night. I had been thinking of mother and father, and you and Ann."

So that was what had sent him to her!

"Dear mother!" she sighed.

"Yes, sister," he resumed, "I have begun to think of these things, and shall put my affairs in order."

"Make your peace first, and attend to your affairs afterward. But excuse me for a few minutes; I hear the door-bell ring. You know I am 'at home.'" And she withdrew.

He walked up and down the room in a brown-study, occasionally stopping to look at the pictures and objects of *vertu*.

"I don't think Judith is as mercenary as she was. Her last advice was good—from her point of view. I would not have believed she could be so disinterested. We shall get on well together, I hope. I don't know what to do for her, though. If this house is really Trevor's he is in no need of help from me, and, even if he were, I could not give it to him cheerfully; for, first and last, he has muddled away a hundred thousand of mine. He's always muddling away somebody's money. If he would pay back that now I would settle it, and as much more, on Judith. It would be a nest-egg for her in case any thing should happen. I wonder if she wouldn't like a set of diamonds?"

Whether Mrs. Trevor heard the bell, as she said, or whether it was her fancy, is of no great consequence. It is enough for us to know that no person was in the front parlor when she entered it, which rather pleased her than otherwise, since it gave her an opportunity to run over what had just occurred between herself and her brother. "How unfortunate it is," she said, "that I couldn't know that he was coming; and how unfortunate that we are prosperous! He would have done something handsome else, for it is certain that he isn't satisfied with the way he has used me. He must be very much changed, or he wouldn't have said that he no longer cared for money. When a Gurney feels like that, his end is near! He hasn't made his will, it seems, unless he is deceiving me, and I don't believe he is. He may remember the children. He must; I mean to bring it about. But how—how? I can't ask him to leave Elizabeth any thing; he'll think Percy can take care of himself, and I haven't said a word in Jack's favor. How stupid of me! I could cry my eyes out with rage." But she thought better of it; for, smoothing the flounces of her robe, she rejoined her brother with a sweet, sad, smiling face.

Drawing an easy-chair up to the fire she made him sit down, and placed herself on his left, where she could see him best. "How good of you to come!" she exclaimed; "and how sorry I am that none of the children are at home!"

"You are fond of your children, Judith?"

"Fond is not the word, John. But I can not expect a man to understand the feelings of a mother. No man can—least of all a hard-headed bachelor like you. I wonder—no, I do not, either, for you never liked women, I remember."

"Perhaps I am cured of that—who knows?"

What did he mean? Was he— But no, it could not be.

"By-the-way, John, how did you know I was 'at home' to-day?"

"How does any body know any thing now, except from the newspapers, which tell us every thing that happens, and a great many things that do not happen. I read it in *The Tickler and Tattler*. But your speaking of being 'at home' reminds me that we shall be 'at home' ourselves soon. I will send you a card to-morrow or next day."

"John Gurney, you have not been getting married?"

A queer smile flitted across his face: he enjoyed her mistake.

"Why not? I am old enough, I suppose."

"Too old—to make such a fool of yourself."

At this moment the bell rang, and so loudly that both heard it: a sudden, impatient jerk.

She was on her feet at once.

"Sit down, and let me tell you about it. Last summer, when I was ill—and I was very ill, Judith—I think I shall never recover the shock I had then—there came to me—"

"Where's mamma?" cried a voice without.

"In the back parlor, my lady," the servant was heard to answer.

A rush of steps to the door, which was thrown open violently. "Mamma! mamma!"

"Lady Onslow! Elizabeth," said Mrs. Trevor, starting to her feet, "how you have frightened me!"

John Gurney arose, somewhat startled, and was perceived by the new-comer.

"I didn't know you had company."

"It's only your uncle John. You remember Uncle John?"

"No—do I?"

"So this is little Lizzy that was," he said, coming forward: "the bud has indeed ripened. I hope you are well, Lady Onslow."

She stared at him, and at her mother, and burst into tears—wild, passionate tears, that could not be restrained.

"For God's sake, Elizabeth, what is the matter? Why are you here? Where is Lord Onslow? Tell me."

A spasm of pain twitched the face of the beautiful girl; she shuddered from head to foot.

John Gurney would have left the room.

"Stay, brother, and help me to unravel this mystery. Where is Lord Onslow, I say?" She spoke sharply, and shook her daughter by the shoulder.

"There is no Lord Onslow, mother."

"Are you mad?"

"I think I can tell you what has happened, Judith," interposed John Gurney. "You have married your daughter to an adventurer. Am I not right, my child?"

She bowed sadly. "Worse, Sir—a villain. See here, mother." And stripping up her sleeve, she pointed to black and blue spots on her arm, which were evidently the grip of strong fingers. "He struck me, too; but I forgave him, for he was drunk."

"The more fool you," remarked her mother.

"I loved him, and I forgave him." She paused, and put her hand to her head as if she was trying to remember something. "We were staying in Washington this week, quietly and happily, planning what we would do when we should return. *I* was, that is, and he agreed to it. Night before last I retired early, while he was playing billiards with one of the embassy. When I awoke in the morning he had not returned. He had abandoned me."

"Have you finished, fool?" demanded her mother.

("Judith!")

"No; he robbed me of my jewels, and all the money he could find. He would have taken my purse, I suppose, but it was under my pillow. There was enough in it to bring me home."

She told her story without a tear or a sigh. She was the calmest person there—so calm that she seemed to have been relating the wrongs of another, not her own. Mrs. Trevor, poor woman, was in a furious passion, enraged with her daughter, her brother, herself—enraged with every body and every thing. Speechless with fury and shame, she appeared to have grown old suddenly; the bloom had vanished from her cheeks, the lustre was gone from her eyes. They had become gray and faded.

"So," she shrieked, when she found a voice, "this is the reward of all my motherly care, the end of all my ambition! Do you know what you have done? You have ruined me. I shall never dare to hold up my head again. We shall be the laughing-stock of all our acquaintances. I shall die with shame."

"And I, mother?" asked the poor girl.

"Mother me no more; you are no child of mine."

"*Judith!*"

"What brought you here? Do you think I will have you here—Lady Onslow?"

"Judith, Judith—you are brutal."

"Mind your business, John Gurney—this is mine."

"Where shall I go, mother?"

"Where you will. You shall not remain here."

"You refuse to receive your daughter, then, Judith?" said John Gurney, looking his sister steadily in the face.

"I do."

"You are a wicked woman."

He turned toward his niece in his stately way, looking like what he was—the soul of chivalry and kindness. "My child, I am a lonesome old man. Will you not share and brighten my solitude? Say 'yes'—I wish it so much." He opened his arms, and she rushed toward him with a cry. He smoothed the ripples of her hair with one hand, and brushed a tear from his eye with the other.

"Come," he said at last.

"Good-by, mother."

"Good-morning, Mrs. Trevor."

Where was Mrs. Trevor's heart? where was Mrs. Trevor's conscience? where was Mrs. Trevor's worldliness, even—that day? Clearly *not* "at home."

VENICE.

UNLIKE other celebrated towns of Italy—such as Padua, Mantua, Naples, and Rome itself—Venice is not an old classical city. According to the best historians it dates from the 25th day of March, in the year of our Lord 421, when Simon de Glauconibus, Antonius Calvus, and other lovers of liberty, who sought a refuge from oppression among the islands and lagoons of the coast, laid the foundations of the new commonwealth on the Rialto, the nearest island to the embouchure of the Brenta. The state of which they were the founders had a long and for many centuries a very prosperous existence. Under a nominal subjection to Padua and other cities of old Venetia it passed its first two hundred and seventy-six years. For the following six hundred years, during which it made great additions to its power and wealth, Venice was governed by her doges—a sort of monarchs whom the citizens elected, and whose power they limited. After that, and during the last five hundred years of her existence, she was really and practically governed by her nobles. Then came the end. France, ever ready to seize on other territories, but too proud to cede a foot of her own, deposed the last doge by the hands of her great general, Napoleon Bonaparte, and, abolishing this republic, added to her other crimes against the peace and liberties of Europe the destruction of a state which, crowned with honors equal to its age, had existed for the long period of thirteen hundred years.

In many respects Venice is now but the ghost and shadow of what she was in the days of her meridian splendor. Silence broods on her canals; the marbles are peeling off her palaces like shreds of bark off a dead, skeleton tree; and though they retain in their gait much of the proud and lofty bearing of other days, not less than one-fourth part of her inhabitants are so poor as to be more or less dependent on public charity. What a fall is there from the days when Jacopo Sannazaro, about the middle of the fifteenth century, composed these lines—thus translated!

"Neptune saw Venice on the Adria stand
Firm as a rock, and all the sea command.
'Think'st thou, O Jove,' said he, 'Rome's walls excel?
Or that proud cliff whence false Tarpeia fell?
Grant Tiber best, view both, and you will say,
That men did those, gods these foundations lay.'"

These verses give us a good idea of the ancient glory of Venice; and this of the wealth and munificence of her citizens, that the poet received—the largest reward literature, in the form of poetry or prose, ever won—for these six lines six thousand golden crowns. But low as she has fallen, Venice seems to have passed the lowest ebb-tide of her fortunes. Since the Austrian was driven from her territory, since she has shared in the new-born liberties of Italy, since the Gospel, banished in the days of her degeneracy, is now faithfully preached and openly professed there, and her people are learning that "whom the truth maketh free are free indeed," there is good reason to hope that this city will yet be the subject and the scene of a great, glorious, and more than temporal revival.

With graceful towers, domes, campaniles, and palaces standing in rich clusters out of the shoreless waters that rise with the tide on every door-step, and, carrying boats and gondolas in place of carts and carriages, form its principal and almost its only streets, the city might have owed its name—though it had a different origin—to the old heathen legend that represents Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, as born of the ocean. Venice looks like a city torn by some great convulsion from the shore, and, with all its churches, palaces, manufactories, and houses standing erect and entire, floated out to sea, and securely anchored to its sandy bed. Save dogs and cats, there is no four-footed animal in all the town—no horses, nor cows, nor even a donkey. Wheels are unknown; their grinding, rumbling noise never heard where sheets of water, along which gondolas, in place of cabs and omnibuses, are shooting with their passengers, separate opposite neighbors, the houses on one side of the street from those on the other. A unique city, indeed! since, with the houses built on piles that have been driven into the bed of the sea, there, as has been said, we roost on the tops of trees.

HUMORS OF THE DAY.

SAID a loving wife to her husband, "Will you never learn, my dear, the difference between real and exchangeable value?" The husband, tired of political economy, replied, "Ah yes, my dear, I know your great learning and many virtues. That's your real value. But I know also that none of my married friends would change wives with me. That's your exchangeable value."

A gentleman, speaking of the happiness of the married state before his daughter, disparagingly said, "She who marries, does well; but she who does not marry, does better." "Well, then," said the young lady, "I will *do well;* let those who choose *do better.*"

The man whose feet were so enormously large that he had to put his pantaloons on over his head has recently joined the woman's rights party, and has wisely determined to wear a shawl.

A traveler in Georgia, down among the rice swamps, observing the sallow, sunken-eyed, emaciated appearance of the inhabitants, asked one of them if the climate was unhealthy. "Wa'al, no," replied the sickly looking fellow; "'taint unhealthy; we have the fever and ague all the time in these parts; but then we enjoy a powerful undertow of health, which beats the ague all to nothing!"

Hair-pins are now called switch-tenders.

WEATHER RHYMES.

February fill dyke,
Be it black or be it white;
But if it is white,
It is better to like.

March winds and April showers
Bring out the May flowers.

He who sees his wheat on a weeping May
Will himself go weeping away;
But he who sees it on a weeping June
Will go away to another tune.

When the sand doth feed the clay,
England woe and well-a-day;
But when the clay doth feed the sand,
Then 'tis well with Angle Land.

A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay;
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spoon;
A swarm of bees in July
Is not worth a fly.

After St. Bartholomew
Come long evenings and cold dew.

At a wedding the other day one of the guests, who often is a little absent-minded, observed, gravely, "I have often remarked that there have been *more* women than men married this year."

A LOW FUR—Cat-skin.

A Dutchman, in describing a span of horses which he had lost, said: "Dey wash very mooch alike, 'specially de off one. One looks so much like both, I could not tell todder from which; when I went after de one I always caut de oder; an' I whipped de one most deal because de oder kicked at me."

A HINT TO MILLINERS—Enough on that head.

An exchange says: "Marriage makes a man and woman one." Yes, but the trouble is to tell which of them is *the* one.

Stammering, says Coleridge, is sometimes the cause of a pun. Some one was mentioning, in Lamb's presence, the cold-heartedness of the Duke of Cumberland in restraining the Duchess from rushing up to embrace her son, whom she had not seen for a considerable time, and insisted on her receiving him in state. "How horribly *cold* it was," said the narrator. "Yes," said Lamb, in his stuttering way; "but you know he is the Duke of *Cu-cumber-land.*"

A man in a crowd found elbow-room quickly by telling a neighbor that he was sitting on his revolver.

An exchange says: "The compositors in San Francisco embrace many ladies." The compositors in San Francisco ought to be ashamed of themselves.

An English writer thinks the American early potatoes will come to an end ere long, for as each new variety is claimed to ripen about ten days earlier than any other, the time between planting and digging will soon be used up.

There is a man in Dacotah, Iowa, so penurious that when shelling corn, and a kernel flew into a wood-pile, he removed seven cords of wood to find it. A neighbor, standing near, dropped a kernel near where the searcher was looking. But when he found it he said: "You can't fool me with that small kernel; the one I lost was a large one."

Why is a butcher's cart like his boots?—Because he carries his calves there.

MANAGING A HUSBAND.—"How do you manage your husband, Mrs. Croaker? Such a job as I have of it with Smith!" "Easiest thing in the world, my dear; give him a twitch backward when you want him to go forward. For instance, you see, to-day I had a loaf of cake to make. Well, do you suppose because my body is in the pastry-room that my soul need be there, too? Not a bit of it. I am thinking of all sorts of celestial things the while. Now Croaker has a way of tagging round at my heels, and bringing me plump down, in the midst of my aerial flights, by asking me the price of the sugar I'm using. Well, you see, it drives me frantic! and when I woke up this morning, and saw this furious storm, I knew I had him on my hands for the day, unless I managed right; so I told him that I hoped he wouldn't go out to catch his death such weather; that if he wasn't capable of taking care of himself, I should do it for him; that it was very lonesome rainy days, and that I wanted him to stay at home and talk with me; at any rate he mustn't go out; and I hid his umbrella and India rubbers. Well, of course, he was right end up; (just as I expected!) and in less than ten minutes was streaking down street at the rate of ten knots an hour. You see there's nothing like understanding human nature; no woman should be married till she is thoroughly posted up in this branch of her education."

"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH!"

A FRIEND IN NEED.

A REVERIE.

THE CHILDREN'S STOCKINGS.

(ON CHRISTMAS-EVE.)

He will see sweet stockings cunning and new,
Warm in scarlet and dainty in white—
Stockings that never have crept in a shoe—
Waiting his morning's enchanted light.

And other glad stockings, that he should know,
Grown larger, perhaps, than they were last year!
In many a pretty, half-sleepy row
They wonder, no doubt, if he is near.

This Saint of the Children, who loves them so,
Fairly filling each colored space,
Will touch clear dreams with his kiss—and go
With tears, I think, in his tender face.

Ah! spite of his furs, he will shiver, I fear,
At the thought of stockings, bright and small,
Whose curious looks are no longer here,
Awake for him by the lonesome wall!

Oh! you whose little hands reach no more
Toward his gray, kind beard in their dimpled play,
Whose little feet passed through the great dim Door,
With never a step nor a sound, away—

Have you found Another who lights with love
His Birthday Tree for your charmèd eyes?
Do you see in its branches the snow-white Dove?
Is it fair with the flowering and fruit of the skies?

Mrs. G. M. B. Piatt.

BRED IN THE BONE.

By the Author of "Carlyon's Year," "One of the Family," "A Beggar on Horseback," "Gwendoline's Harvest," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CURTIUS.

Richard had many subjects for thought to beguile his lonely way to Gethin, but one was paramount, and absorbed the rest, though he strove to dismiss it all he could.

He endeavored to think of his dead mother. His heart was full of her patient love and weary, childless life: but her portrait faded from his mind like a dissolving view, and in its place stood that of Solomon Coe, haggard, emaciated, hideous. Still less could he think of Harry and her son, between whom and himself this spectre of the unhappy man rose up at once, summoned by the thought of them, as by a spell. It did not occur to Richard even now that he had had no right to kill him; but he shuddered to think, if he had really done so, how this late opening flower of love which he had just discovered would blossom into fear and loathing. In that case his heart would have been softened only to be pierced. His mother's death, the knowledge of Harry's fidelity, and of the existence of his son, to whom his affection had been already drawn, unknowingly and in spite of himself, had dissolved his cruel purpose. He was eager to spare his mother's memory the shame of the foul crime he had contemplated, and passionately anxious that in the veins of his new-found son there should at least run no murderer's blood.

"Faster! faster!" was still his cry, though the horses galloped whenever it was practicable, and the wheels cast the winter's mire into his eager face. This haste was made, as he well knew, upon the road to his own ruin. To find Solomon alive was to be accused of having compassed his death. There was no hope in the magnanimity of such a foe. But yesterday Richard had cared little or nothing for his own safety, and was only bent upon the prosecution of his scheme against his foe; now life had mysteriously become dear to him, and he was about to risk it in saving the man he had hated most on earth from the doom to which he had himself consigned him. He had calculated the possibilities which were in his own favor, and they had resolved themselves into this single chance—that Solomon might be induced, by the unconditional offer of Wheal Danes and its golden treasure, to forego his revenge. His greed was great; but his malice, as Richard had good cause to know, was also not easily satisfied. Moreover, even if his victim should decline to be his prosecutor, he would still stand in great peril. It was only too probable that he would be recognized at Gethin for the stranger that had so lately been staying at Turlock; he had not, indeed, mentioned his assumed name at the latter place; but his lack of interest in the fate of Solomon—whose disappearance had been narrated to him by the waitress—and his departure from the town under such circumstances, would (in case of his identification) be doubtless contrasted with this post-haste journey of his to deliver this same man. He had made up his mind, however, to neglect no precautions to avoid this contingency. It would be dark when he got to Gethin; and his purpose once accomplished he might easily escape recognition, unless he should be denounced by Solomon himself. In that case Richard was fully determined that he would glut no more the curiosity of the crowd. He would never stand in the prisoner's dock, or be consigned again to stone walls. The gossips should have a dead man's face to gaze at, and welcome; they might make what sport they pleased of that, but not again of his living agony. Then, instead of his being Solomon's murderer, he would be his victim. To judge by his present feeling, thought Richard, bitterly, this man would not enjoy his triumph even then. Revenge, as his mother had once told him, was like a game of battle-door—it is never certain who gets the last stroke. If Solomon was now dead, starved skeleton or rat-eaten corpse as he might be, Richard felt that he would still have had the advantage over him.

"What is it? Why are we stopping?" cried he, frantically, as the man pulled up on the top of a hill.

"Let me breathe the horses for an instant," pleaded the driver; "we shall gain time in the end."

"How far are we still from Gethin?" inquired Richard, impatiently.

"In time, two hours, Sir, for the road is bad, though me and the horses will do our best; but the distance is scarce twelve miles. Do you see that black thing out to seaward yonder? That's the castled rock. He stands out fine against the sunset, don't he?"

"Yes, yes; make haste;" and on they sped again at a gallop.

Within a mile or two of this spot Richard had first caught sight of that same object twenty years ago. The occasion flashed upon him with every minutest circumstance, even to the fact of how hungry he had been at the moment. The world was all before him then, and life was young. Now, prematurely aged, his interest centred in three human beings, and one of those was his bitter enemy.

The dusk thickened into dark; and the tired horses—for the stage had been a very long one—made but slow way.

"Faster! faster!" was Richard's constant cry, till the brow of the last hill was gained, and the scanty lights of Gethin showed themselves. Then it suddenly struck him for the first time what unnecessary speed had been made. Why, this man, Solomon, strong and inured to privation, had, after all, been but eight-and-forty hours in the mine, and would surely be alive, unless the rats had killed him. Where had he somewhere read of a strong man overpowered in a single night by a legion of rats, and discovered a heap of clean-picked bones by morning?

The inn, as usual at that season, showed few signs of life; but there were some half dozen miners drinking at the bar.

"Keep those men," said Richard to the inn-keeper; for Solomon had long delegated that office to another, though his own name was still over the door, and the *Gethin Castle* was still his home. "I shall want their help to-night."

"Their help, Sir?" said the astonished landlord.

"Yes; but say nothing for the present. Bring me a bottle of brandy and some meat—cold chicken, if you have it; then let me have a word with you."

Richard did not order the food for himself. While it was being brought he sat down in the very chair that he had used so often—for he had been ushered into his old parlor—and gazed about him. There were the same tawdry ornaments on the mantel-piece, and the same books on the dusty shelf. Nothing was altered except the tenant of that room; but how great a change had taken place in *him!* What a face the dingy mirror offered him in place of that which it had shown him last! When the inn-keeper returned his mind involuntarily conjured up old Trevethick, as he had received from him the key of the ruin, and doggedly taken his compliments upon its workmanship. Truly, "there is no such thing as forgetting;" and to recall our past to its minutest details at the judgment-day will not be so impracticable as some of us would desire.

Richard had made up his mind exactly as to what he would say to this man, but a question suddenly presented itself, which had been absent from his thoughts from the moment that he had resolved to rescue his enemy. It was a very simple one, too, and would have occurred to any one else, as it had done already many times to himself.

"Has Mr. Coe been found yet?"

He listened for the answer eagerly, for if such was the case, not only was his journey useless, but had brought him into the very jaws of destruction. He would have thrown away his life for nothing.

"No, Sir, indeed—and he never will be," replied the inn-keeper. "When the sea don't give a man up in four-and-twenty hours, it keeps him for good—at least we always find it so at Gethin."

"Well, listen to me. My name is Balfour. I knew Mr. Coe, and have had dealings with him. We had arranged a partnership together in a certain mine; and it is my opinion that he came down here upon that business."

"Very like, Sir. He was much engaged that way, and made, they say, a pretty penny at it."

"I was at Plymouth, on my way to join him, when I heard this sad news. I came to-day post-haste in consequence of it. The search for him must be renewed to-night."

"Lor, Sir, it is easy to see you are a stranger in these parts! I wouldn't like to go myself where poor Mr. Coe met his end, on so dark a night as this. It's a bad path even in daylight along Turlock cliff."

"He did not take that way, at least I think not. Have you a ladder about the premises?"

"Yes, sure."

"And a lantern?"

"Now that's strange enough, Sir, that you should have inquired for a lantern; for we wanted one just now to see to your horses, and, though they're looking for it high and low, it can't be found nowhere."

"It doesn't strike you, then, that Mr. Coe might have taken it with him?"

"Lor, Sir," cried the inn-keeper, with admiration, "and so he must ha' done! Of course it strikes one when the thing has been put into one's head. Well, 'twas a good lantern, and now 'tis lost. Dear me, dear me!"

Golden visions of succeeding to the management of the inn, and of taking to the furniture and fixings in the gross, had flitted across this honest gentleman's brain, and the disappearance of the lantern affected him with the acute sense of pecuniary damage. The general valuation would probably be no less because of the absence of this article.

"Send out and borrow another, as many, in fact, as you can get," said Richard, impatiently; "and get ready a torch or two besides. Pick out four of the strongest men yonder, and bid them come with me, and search Wheal Danes."

"What! that old pit, Sir? You'll not find a man to do it—no, not if they knowed as master was at the bottom of it. You wait till morning."

"Your master *is* at the bottom of it. I feel sure he took the lantern with him to search that mine. I will give them a pound apiece to start at once. Pack up this food, and lend them a mattress to bring him home upon. Be quick! be quick!"

Richard's energy fairly overpowered the phlegmatic inn-keeper, whose conscience, perhaps, also smote him with respect to his missing master; and he set about the execution of these orders promptly. Wheal Danes, he had truly hinted, was a very unpopular spot with its neighbors after nightfall; but, on the other hand, sovereigns were rare in Gethin, and greatly prized. In less than half an hour the necessaries which Richard had indicated were procured, and a party, consisting of himself, four stalwart miners, and the inn-keeper, started for the pit. These were followed by half the inhabitants of the little village, attracted by the rumor of their purpose, which had oozed out from the bar of the *Gethin Castle.* The windy down had probably never known so strange a concourse as that which presently streamed over it, with torch and lantern, and stood around the mouth of the disused mine. The night was dark, and nothing could be seen save what the flare of the lights they carried showed them—a jagged rim of pit without a bottom. Notwithstanding their numbers there was but little talk among them; they had a native dread of this dismal place, and, besides, there might now be a ghastly secret hidden within it. A muffled exclamation, half of admiration, half of awe, broke from the circling crowd as, the ladder planted, Richard was seen descending it torch in hand. No other man followed; none had volunteered, and he had asked for no companion. They watched him, as the countrymen of those who had formerly worked Wheal Danes might have watched Curtius when he leaped into the gulf; and as in *his* case, when they saw the ladder removed, and the light grow dim, and finally die out before their eyes, it seemed that the pit had closed on Richard—that he was swallowed up alive. No one, unless the strange story about their missing neighbor which this man had brought was true, had ventured into Wheal Danes for these fifty years! They kept an awe-struck silence, straining eye and ear. Some thought they could still see a far-off glimmer, others that they could hear a stifled cry, when the less fortunate or the less imaginative could hear or see nothing. But after a little darkness and silence reigned supreme beneath them; they seemed standing on the threshold of a tomb.

CHAPTER XLVII.

WHAT WAS FOUND IN WHEAL DANES.

A full half hour—which to the watchers above seemed a much longer interval—had elapsed since Richard had disappeared in the depths of Wheal Danes, and not a sign of his return had reached the attentive throng.

"I thought he'd come to harm," muttered a fisherman to his neighbor; "it was a sin and a shame to let him venture."

"Ay, you may say that," returned the other, aloud. "I call it downright murder in them as sent him."

"It was not I as sent him," observed the inn-keeper, with the honest indignation of a man that has not right habitually on his own side. "What *I* said to the gentleman was, 'Wait till morning.' Why should *I* send him?" Here he stopped, though his reasons for not wishing to hurry matters would have been quite conclusive.

"Why was he let to go down at all, being a stranger?" resumed the first speaker. "Why didn't somebody show him the way?"

"Because nobody knowed it," answered one of the four miners whose services Richard had retained, and who justly imagined that the fisherman's remark had been a reflection on his own profession. "I'd ha' gone down Dunloppel with him at midnight, or any other mine as can be called such; but this is different."

"Ay, ay, that's so," said a second miner. "We know no more of this place than you fishermen. There may be as much water in it as in the sea, for aught we can tell."

"It's my belief they're more afraid of the Dead Hand than the water," observed a voice from the crowd, the great majority of which was composed of fisher folk.

No reply was given to this; perhaps because the speaker, an old cripple, the Thersites of the village, was beneath notice, perhaps because the remark was unanswerable. The miners were bold enough against material enemies, but they were superstitious to a man.

"If Solomon Coe were alive," continued the same voice, "he wouldn't ha' feared nothin'."

"That's the first word, old man, as ever I heard you speak in his favor," said a miner, contemptuously; "and you've waited for that till he's dead."

"Still, he would ha' gone, and you durstn't," observed the old fellow, cunningly, "and that's the p'int."

These allusions to the Dead Hand and to the missing Solomon were not of a nature to inspire courage in those to whom it was already lacking, and a silence again ensued. There was less light, for a torch or two had gone out, and the mine looked blacker than ever.

"Well, who's a-going down?" croaked the old cripple. "The gentleman came from your inn, Jonathan, and it's your place, I should think, to look after him."

"Certainly not," answered the inn-keeper, hastily. "These men here were hired for this very service."

"That's true," said the first miner. "But what's the use of talking when the gentleman has got the ladder with him?"

"There's more ladders in the world than one," observed the cripple. "Here's my grandson, John; he and half a dozen of these young fellows would fetch Farmer Gray's in less than no time. Come, lads—be off with ye."

This suggestion was highly applauded, except by the miner who had so injudiciously compromised himself, and was carried out at once.

When the ladder arrived the three other miners, ashamed of deserting their comrade, volunteered to descend with him. The excitement among the spectators was great, indeed, when these four men disappeared in the levels of Wheal Danes, as Richard had done before them. The light of their combined torches lingered a little in their rear; the sound of their voices, as they halloed to one another or to the missing man, was heard for several minutes. But darkness and silence swallowed *them* up also, and the watchers gazed on one another aghast.

It is not an easy thing, even for those accustomed to underground labor, to seach an unfamiliar spot by torch-light; the fitful gleam makes the objects on which it falls difficult of identification. It is doubtful whether one has seen this or that before or not—whether we are not retracing old ground. Even to practiced eyes these objects, too, are not so salient as the tree or the stone which marks a locality above-ground; add to this, in the present case, that the searchers were momently in expectation of coming upon something which they sought and yet feared to find, and it will be seen that their progress was of necessity but slow. They kept together, too, as close as sheep, which narrowed the compass of their researches, and caused their combined torches to distribute only as much light as one man would have done provided with a chandelier. They knew, however, that their predecessor had descended into the second level, so that they did not need to explore the first at all. The ground was hard, and gave forth echoes to their cautious but heavy tread; their cries of "Hollo!" "Are you there?" which they reiterated, like nervous children playing hide-and-seek, reverberated from roof to wall.

Presently, when they stopped to listen for these voices of the rock to cease, there was heard a human moan. It seemed to come up from a great depth out of the darkness before them. They listened earnestly, and the sound was repeated—the faint cry of a man in grievous pain.

"There must be another level," observed the miner who had volunteered the search. "This man has fallen down it."

They had therefore to go back for the ladder. Pushing this before them, the end began presently to run freely, and then stopped; it had adjusted itself by the side of the shorter ladder which Richard had brought down with him.

"He could not have fallen, then," observed a miner, answering his comrade's remark—as is the custom with this class of great doers and small talkers—at a considerable interval.

"Yes, he could," replied the one who had first spoken. "See, his ladder was short, and he may have pitched over."

They stood and listened, peering down into the darkness beneath them; but there was no repetition of the cries. The wounded man had apparently spent his last strength, perhaps his last breath, in uttering them.

"He must be down here somewhere. Come on."

The situation was sufficiently appalling; but these men had lost half their terrors, now that they knew there was a fellow-creature needing help. They descended slowly; and he who was foremost presently cried out, "I see him; here he is."

The man was lying on his face quite still; and when they lifted him, each looked at the other with a grave significance—they had carried too many from the bowels of the earth to the pit's mouth not to know when a man was dead. Even a senseless body is not the same to an experienced bearer as a dead weight. The corpse was still warm, but the head fell back with a movement not of life.

"You were right, mate. His neck is broke; the poor gentleman pitched over on his head."

"Stop a bit," exclaimed the man addressed; "see here. Why, it ain't him at all—it's Solomon Coe."

An exclamation of astonishment burst involuntarily from the other three.

"Then where's the other?" cried they all together.

"I am here," answered a ghastly whisper.

Within but a few feet of Solomon, so that they could hardly have overlooked him had not the former monopolized their attention, lay Richard, grievously hurt. Some ribs were broken, and one of them was pressed in upon the lungs. Still he was alive, and the men turned their attention first to him, since Solomon was beyond their aid. By help of the two ladders, side by side, they bore him up the wall of rock; and so from level to level—a tedious and painful journey to the wounded man—to the upper air.

He was carried to the inn upon the mattress which his own care had provided for another; while the four miners, to the amazement of the throng, once more descended into the pit for a still more ghastly burden.

Richard could speak a little, though with pain. By his orders a messenger was dispatched that night to Plymouth to telegraph the news of the discovery of her husband's body to Mrs. Coe. His next anxiety was to hear the surgeon's report, not on his own condition, but on that of Solomon. This gentleman did not arrive for some hours, and Richard was secretly well pleased

at his delay. It was his hope, for a certain reason, that he would not arrive until the body was stiff and cold.

He saw Richard first, of course. The case was very serious; so much so that he thought it right to mention the fact, in order that his patient might settle his worldly affairs if they needed settlement.

"There is no immediate danger, my good Sir; but it is always well in such cases to have the mind free from anxiety."

"I understand; it is quite right," said Richard, gravely. "Moreover, since the opportunity may not occur again, let me now state how it all happened."

"Nay, you must not talk. We know it all, or at least enough of it for the present."

"What do you know?" asked Richard, with his eyes half shut, but with eager ears.

"That in your benevolent attempt to seek after Mr. Coe you met with the same accident—though I trust it will not have the same ending—as that unfortunate gentleman himself. He pitched upon his head and broke his neck, while you fell upon your side."

"That is so," murmured Richard. "He and I were partners, you see—"

"There, there; not a word more," insisted the doctor; "your deposition can wait."

And having done what he could for his patient, he left him, in order to examine the unfortunate Solomon. His investigation corroborated all that he had already heard of the circumstances of his death, with which also Richard's evidence accorded. An observation made by one of the miners who had found the body, to the effect that it was yet warm when they had come upon it, excited the surgeon's ridicule. "It is now Tuesday morning, my friend," said he, "and this poor fellow met with his death on Saturday night for certain. He could not, therefore, have been much warmer when you found him than he is now."

"Well, me and my mate here we both fancied—"

"I dare say you did, my man," interrupted the doctor; "and fancy is a very proper word to apply to such an impression. If you take my advice, however, you will not repeat such a piece of evidence when put upon your oath, for the thing is simply impossible."

"Then I suppose we be in the wrong," said Dick to Jack; and on that supposition they acted.

In this way too self-reliant Science, whose mission it is to explode fallacies, occasionally assists in the explosion or suffocation of a fact, for Solomon Coe had not been dead half an hour when his body was found.

When Richard, alone on his errand of mercy, was approaching the brink of the third level, he could hear Solomon calling lustily for help. Nay, it was not only "Help!" but "Murder!" that he cried out; and notwithstanding the menace that that word implied toward himself, Richard hurried on, well pleased to hear it; the vigor of the cry assured him that his enemy was not only living, but unhurt. As the light he carried grew more distinct to him, indeed, these shouts redoubled; but when it came quite near, and disclosed the features of its bearer, there was a dead silence. The two men stood confronting one another—the one in light, distinctly seen, looking down upon the other in shade, just as they had parted only eight-and-forty hours ago. To one of them, as we know, this space had been eventful; but to the other it had seemed a lifetime—an age of hopes and fears, and latterly of cold despair, which had now been warmed once more to hope only to freeze again. For was not this man, to whom he had looked for aid, his cruel foe come back to taunt him?—to behold him already half-way toward death, and to make its slow approach more bitter. But great as was his agony Solomon held his peace, nor offered to this monarch of his fate the tribute of a groan.

"I am come to rescue you," said Richard, in low but distinct tones; "to undo the evil that I have already done, although it was no less than you deserved, nor an overpayment of the debt I owed you. In return you will doubtless denounce me as having meant to murder you."

No answer. If Richard had not heard his cries, it would have seemed that this poor wretch had lost the power of speech. His huge head drooped upon his shoulder, and he leaned against the rocky wall as though his limbs could not have otherwise supported themselves; they shook indeed—but was it with weakness or with hate?—as though he had the palsy.

"Well, you will have reason to do so," continued Richard, calmly, "for I did mean to murder you. In ten minutes hence you will find yourself among your neighbors, free to act as you please. I shall make no appeal to your mercy; it would, I know, be as fruitless as was yours to mine the other day; but if you abstain from molesting me, this mine, with all its hidden treasure, shall be your own. I have nothing more to say."

Solomon answered nothing. "Perhaps," thought Richard, "he still doubts me.—Well, here is the ladder;" and he suited the action to the word. Solomon's great hand flew out from his side, and clutched a rung as a dog's teeth close upon a bone; a dog's growl, too, half triumph and half threat, came from his deep chest; then he began slowly to ascend, keeping his eyes fixed on Richard. The latter drew back a little to give him space, and watched him with folded arms.

"Now," said Solomon, stepping off the ladder with the prolonged "Ha!" of one who breathes freely after long oppression, "it is *my* turn!"

"What are you about to do?" asked Richard, calmly.

"What! you think we are quits, Richard Yorke, do you? or at least that when I had seen you hung it would seem so to me? You don't know what it is to die here slowly in the dark; you are about to learn that."

"Indeed."

"Yes. You complained the other day of my having used the law against you. Well, you shall not have to reproach me with that a second time. We are about to change places, you and I, that's all. You shall keep sentry down yonder till Death comes to relieve *you*. It was indiscreet in you to venture here alone to dictate terms, my friend."

Solomon's voice was grating and terrible; it had grown hoarse with calling. His form was gaunt and pinched with hunger; his eyes flashed like those of some starving beast of prey.

"I swear to you I came here to rescue you, and with no other purpose," said Richard, earnestly. "I was not afraid of you when you were hale and strong, and much less now when you are weakened with privation; but I do not wish to have your blood upon my hands. I came here to-night—"

"Is it night?" interrupted the other, eagerly. "I did not know that it was night; how should I, in this place, where there is no day? Well, that was still more indiscreet of you, for I shall get away unseen, while you lie here unsought."

"Your scheme is futile. There are fifty men about the pit's mouth now. I have told them—"

"Liar!" Solomon darted forward; and Richard, throwing away the torch, as though disdaining to use any advantage in the way of weapon, grappled with him at once. At the touch of his foe his scruples vanished, and his hate returned with tenfold fury. But he was in the grasp of a giant. Privation had doubtless weakened Solomon, but he had still the strength of a powerful man, and his rage supplied him for the time with all that he had lost. They clung to one another like snakes, and whirled about with frantic violence. Whichever fell undermost was a dead man for certain. For a few moments the expiring torch still showed them each other's hot, vindictive faces; then they battled in the dark, with laboring breath and eager strain, swaying they knew not whither. At last the huge weight of Solomon overbore his lesser antagonist. Richard's limbs gave way beneath him, and he fell, but fell through space; for in their gyrations they had, without knowing it, returned to the top of the ladder. His foe, fast clutched, fell with him, but, pitching on his head, was killed, as we have seen, upon the instant.

This was the true history of what had occurred in the mine, as Richard, on his bed of pain, recalled it step by step, and strove to shape it to his ends.

FISH AT AUCTION.

LIKE every other article of food in Paris, fresh-water fish has become scarce, and brings exorbitant prices. The practice is to dispose of it by auction, as shown in the illustration on page 852; and the excitement, says a letter from Paris, that will be got up over a Seine eel and half a dozen gudgeons—which will be eventually knocked down, the one at five-and-twenty francs and the others at even more—is something tremendous: the screaming and shouting and struggling remind one of that famous scene at the commencement of the siege, when a cargo of Dutch cheeses, the owner of which was unknown, had been handed over by order of the government to the Halles factors for sale by auction, and such a disturbance ensued that it was found necessary to suspend the sale, and to call in armed National Guards to clear the market-place.

THE KING OF SPAIN.

WHEN, by the "bloodless revolution," PRIM and his colleagues upset the old BOURBON rule, there was great elation of spirit among the republicans, who thought their time was come; but the rising was not against the system, but against the dynasty. The country was swept clear of the old rulers with startling suddenness, and PRIM, instead of trying new forms and making a fresh constitution, determined to abide by the old. The thing was to get a king. The General undertook to make one, and, to use a Carlylism, "has been trying desperately ever since, but" for some time "couldn't quite succeed." His failures were many. He appealed to Portugal, to Germany, to Italy; he tried schoolboys and old men; those who were willing were not popular, those who were popular were not willing, and all the time there were the republicans and Carlists and Montpensierists ready to fly at his throat—trying it now and then—the BOURBONS mildly intriguing in Paris, and the Emperor of the French declaring he would not interfere, but quietly hinting objections which were serious obstacles to success.

At last, however, General PRIM has justified his title of "king-maker," and the king whom he has produced is one whom he proposed long ago; but there were difficulties in the way then which have since been removed. AMADEUS FERDINAND MARIE, Duke of Aosta, whose portrait we give on page 861, the second son of the King of Italy, was then heir-presumptive to his father's throne, and he doubtless felt some reluctance to renouncing his claim. Now he no longer stands in that position; an heir has been born to his brother; and, when the HOHENZOLLERN candidature fell through, General PRIM turned once more to Italy, and this time with success. The crown was accepted on two conditions—that the consent of the Cortes should be obtained, and that the European powers should be consulted. To this last General PRIM strongly objected, but was at last obliged to yield. From all courts came messages of congratulation. The Cortes, in spite of a desperate republican resistance, accepted the candidate by what, in the divided state of the country, must be considered a very good majority, and the house of Savoy reigns in Spain as well as in Italy.

King AMADEUS was born on the 30th of May, 1845, and was married in 1867 to Princess MARIE, daughter of Prince CHARLES EMANUEL DEL POZZO DELLA CISTERNA, by whom he has several children, one a son, born since the vote of the Cortes. He is very popular in his own country, inheriting the virtues of his house, bravery and frankness, and without those faults which are said to have at times somewhat dimmed his father's popularity. The house of Savoy is essentially representative of constitutional government. The succession in the present case is assured, so far as such a thing can be. The new king, if not a man of brilliant parts, is honest, and is no bigot, which is all that is needed, and we may therefore hope that under the new dynasty Spain may recover some of her former grandeur and prosperity, emulating Italy in her task of regeneration.

HOME AND FOREIGN GOSSIP.

IN no country, perhaps, is Christmas so universally observed and reverently beloved as in Germany. In the "old country" it is a family festival, to which young and old, rich and poor, look forward with intense delight. For weeks before preparations are made for its proper celebration, so that when Christmas-eve has arrived grown folks and children are all ready to begin the ceremonies with which they are accustomed to observe the day. Every house has its Christmas-tree, which is the object of the most attentive care. None are forgotten in the distribution of gifts; the servants are as sure to share in the general hilarity as the children of the household. It is a maxim with the Germans that every body must be happy on this day. The poor are abundantly remembered; the children in the public schools receive a gift from the public authorities; the sick are visited by sympathizing neighbors. From one end of Germany to the other it is a welcome holiday—a time for the reunion of scattered families, and the strengthening of social and domestic ties. We can, then, imagine what bitter disappointment prevails in thousands of German households, now that Christmas is just at hand, and fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons are far away from home, exposed to the vicissitudes of war. Nay, more: with what sorrow and anguish will multitudes of widows and fatherless children remember, on the coming Christmas-eve, the vacant places at their firesides—places never more to be filled by the beloved ones! The thought of the great increase of suffering caused by the European war will temper the merriment incident to Christmas, and incline the hearts of all to charity.

Certain classes in England are becoming very restless under their present system of government. The "Reform League" recently held a large meeting in London, at which bitter speeches were made, contrasting "the pauperism of the country—there being 137,000 paupers in London alone—to the wealth of the Queen, who draws £400,000 a year, besides other large sums for the royal family." An appeal is made to the entire people, ignorant and educated, to decide by ballot whether or not they should supersede "the present cumbersome and inhuman system of government by the establishment of a republic."

The Prussians caught a Parisian balloon the other day. One which had been successfully used in London was prepared to be sent off. The passengers—mostly wealthy foreigners—had assembled, the passage money was paid, when, by some mismanagement, the balloon was overturned by a gust of wind, and, slipping from the inclosing net, it ascended by itself, and was totally lost to Paris, as it eventually fell into the hands of the enemy.

Maine promises to harvest a much larger crop of ice this year than last, it having been estimated that the Kennebec alone will yield no less than 350,000 tons. Maine generally keeps her promises, but the ice is by no means thick enough to cut yet!

An important experiment was recently successfully tried in the North River—that of blowing up a wrecked vessel. Six tin cans, each holding about ten pounds of powder, were lowered into the wreck, and fired by a galvanic battery. The shock was terrific; but the wreck was thoroughly broken up, and then completely dredged out, thus showing the feasibility of removing sunken vessels from the harbor.

It is said that Luther celebrated Christmas-eve in his family according to the German custom. In an engraving published in Leipsic the great reformer is represented as surrounded by children, and playing upon a gittern—an instrument not unlike the modern guitar.

Typhoid fever and diphtheria often follow a summer drought, because wells and cisterns are not cleansed from the bad water and sediment which have accumulated in them.

The demeanor of Napoleon III. at Sedan was certainly far removed from cowardice, if reports are correct. It is related of him that in the midst of the scene of confusion which ensued upon the irruption of the panic-stricken French into Sedan, while riding slowly through a wide street swept by the German artillery and choked by the disorderly soldiery, he paused for a moment to address a question to a colonel of his staff. At the same instant a shell exploded a few feet before him, leaving him unharmed. The Emperor continued on his way without manifesting the slightest emotion, greeted by the enthusiastic *vivats* of the troops. Later, while sitting at a window inditing his celebrated letter to the King of Prussia, a shell struck the wall just outside, and burst only a few feet from the Emperor's chair, again leaving him unscathed and unmoved.

The Mercantile Library of New York city now numbers over 122,000 volumes. The average number of books delivered to members is 800; some days as many as 1800 are delivered. The library has branches at Stamford, Norwalk, Yonkers, Jersey City, and Elizabeth. The reading-room, which has the reputation of being the largest and best furnished in America, contains over 400 newspapers and periodicals.

A giant Christmas pie is described in an English newspaper, the Newcastle *Chronicle*, of January 6, 1770, as containing two bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild-ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes, four partridges, two neats' tongues, two curlews, seven blackbirds, and six pigeons. This enormous curiosity was made for a baronet—Sir Henry Grey—and measured nearly nine feet in circumference, weighed about twelve stone, and was neatly fitted with a case and four small wheels, to facilitate its use to every guest that inclined to partake of its contents at table.

The ladies of Washington have been much annoyed in past seasons by the large number of uninvited guests who attend private receptions. Often the unasked guests have been as numerous as those to whom cards were sent. Some are even so uncivil as to enter private houses on special occasions. At a certain wedding reception a year ago over one hundred persons with whom the bride and her family were totally unacquainted were present in the assumed character of invited guests. The President's receptions and those of the Speaker of the House of Representatives are the only ones given in the evening for which no cards are issued, and to which every body is privileged to go.

The annual report of the Fire Marshal of this city contains some items of general interest and value to the public. During the year ending October 31 there have been 856 fires. Twenty buildings have been totally destroyed, sixty-nine badly damaged, and over seven hundred slightly damaged. More than half the fires originated from carelessness, the use of inflammable or explosive materials, or were incendiary. No less than two hundred and six fires occurred from carelessness in the use of candles, matches, pipes, and cigars; and thirty were caused by children playing with matches. The number of fires has decreased since last year, one cause being the introduction of the telegraphic alarm system below Fourteenth Street.

The circulation of our prominent newspapers has increased lately to such an extent that presses not long ago considered *fast*, and which could easily print ten to twelve thousand sheets an hour, are now deemed old-fogyish, and are insufficient for the purposes of a first-class daily journal. To meet the exigencies of an increasing trade, Mr. George W. Childs, proprietor of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, some time ago ordered of the Messrs. Hoe a new printing-machine for his newspaper, which, when completed, will enable the establishment to turn out sixty-five thousand copies of the *Ledger* per hour. The new press will cost, we are informed, upward of forty thousand dollars, and will be ready for use in two or three months.

We had thought to give our readers a little idea of the holiday books of 1870-71. But a glance over the shelves of some of the principal book-stores convinces us of the impossibility of so doing in our brief space. Even a mere catalogue of the fresh reading-matter would fill columns. A special feature of the season is the multitude of illustrated "juveniles," which will charm the eyes of expectant young folks, and very decidedly bewilder those who wish to choose for them. Without making invidious distinction—for we are rather bewildered too by the panorama of pictures passing before our eyes—we mention a few of the many which interest us, on behalf of the children. "The Wonderland Stories," among which "Letters Everywhere" contains a most curious and ingenious adaptation of the alphabet to natural objects, amusing to young and old; "Mother Goose in her New Dress;" "True Stories of Real Pets;" "The Children's Week;" "The Adventures of a Young Naturalist," with 117 elegant illustrations; Dickens's "Child's Dream of a Star;" "My Apingi Kingdom," written by the boys' friend, Du Chaillu; "Black Peter," containing *silhouettes* by Paul Konewka's scissors; "Max and Maurice;" "Popular Fairy Tales," illustrated by Doré; "Puss-Cat Mew;" "Punch and Judy;" but the list swells, and the end is yet far off. Nor have we even mentioned the numerous sets of children's books which, beautifully bound and illustrated, come in neat boxes. A visit to our book-stores just now is full of interest to the young people as well as their parents.

Miss Nightingale never ceases to retain the most lively interest in all those who are called to suffer from the exigencies of war. In sending a subscription to the fund for relieving the suffering peasantry of France, she says:

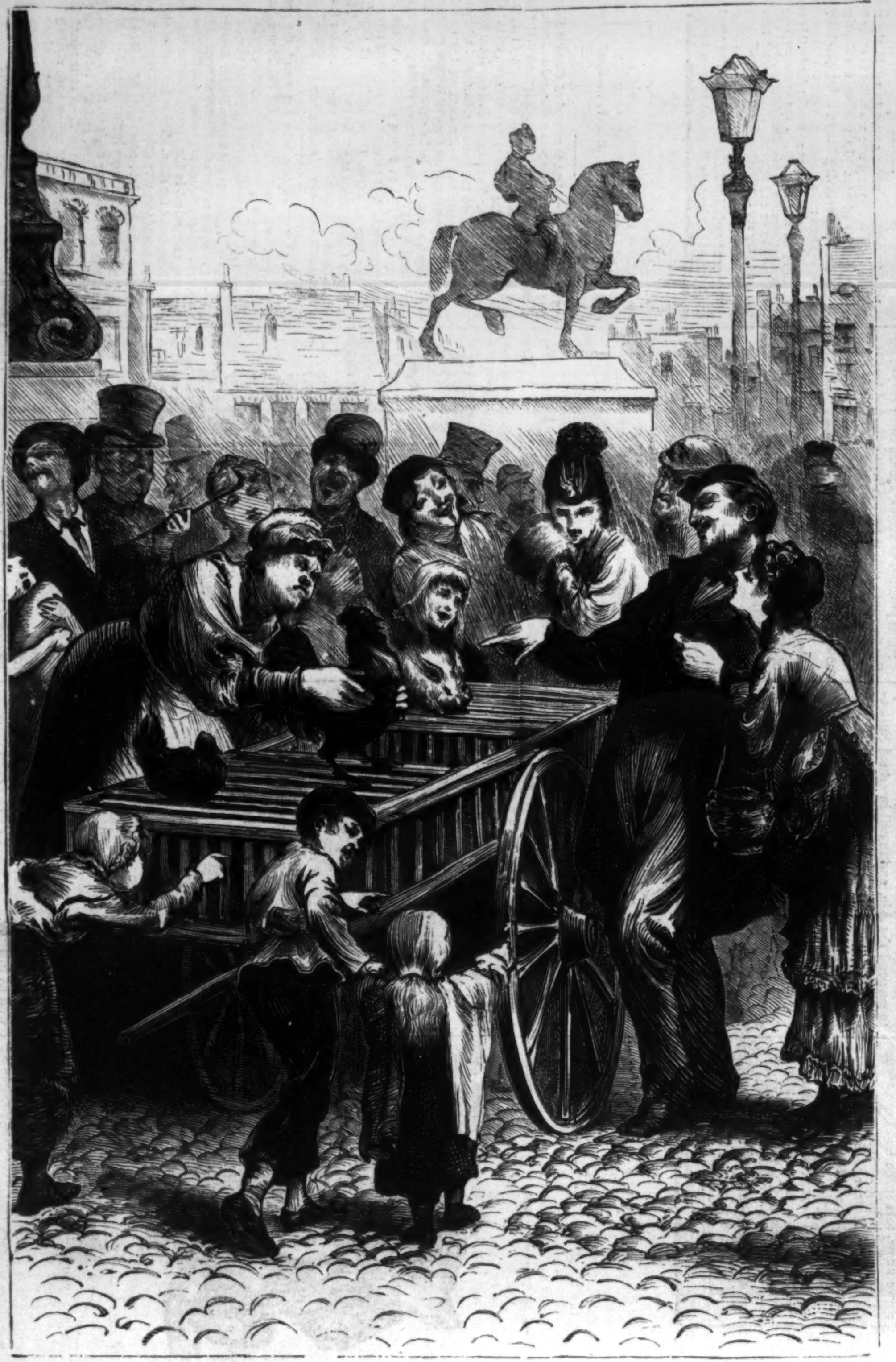
"I wish it was ten times as much; for in this most terrible of all earth's wars—in the countless horrors of this most horrible of mankind's histories—I believe the sufferings of the starving, stripped, and burned-out peasantry are the greatest horrors of all."

Five great cartridge factories in Paris give constant employment to about six thousand women, under the general direction of the artillery artificers. The total daily production is 800,000 cartridges.

An excitement is being aroused concerning the diamond fields of the South, extending over a space of six hundred miles, from Hall County, Georgia, to Virginia. This may prove a counter-irritant to the South African diamond fever.

The following incident is related of General Kératry: A private of Mobiles was sentenced to death by court-martial for insubordination. His pardon, strongly solicited from General Kératry, was sternly refused. On November 18 the whole army was drawn up to witness the execution. The drums rolled the death notes. The culprit received the last consolations of religion, and the firing party was ready awaiting the signal. But at the very last moment General Kératry galloped to the front, and said he had determined to save the man's life, hoping that his clemency might not be misinterpreted, and that in future discipline would be strictly observed. The astounded rebel, thus rescued from the jaws of death, threw himself at General Kératry's feet, or rather at the feet of his horse. The General said, "Rise up, my friend; and remember that a Frenchman should never go down on his knees."

A New Bedford captain, who has spent the past four years in whaling voyages in the Pacific and Arctic oceans, gives it as his opinion that the purchase of Alaska was a good bargain for the United States. He says that the climate is not too severe for Americans, and not so trying to the constitution as tropical countries. The soil is adapted to grazing, and the common vegetables are raised in abundance, making it a good recruiting-ground for ships. The seal-fisheries on the coast and islands are very extensive and valuable. San Francisco gets her fish, codfish, salmon, etc., there. The timber of the Territory is something like the Oregon pine. The cranberry fields of Kodiac Island near the peninsula, are immense, and the berries far surpass in size and are equal in flavor to those of Cape Cod or New Jersey. Gold mines have recently been discovered in Alaska, and California miners have gone there in considerable numbers. The fur trade, of course, is well known to be valuable.



"THE LAST LOT"—SALE OF POULTRY IN PARIS.

THE PARIS FOOD MARKETS.

A ROMAN emperor is reported to have once offered a handsome reward to any one who would invent for him a new dish. Could but this imperial *gourmand* now visit Paris he might revel in dainties as novel as they are reported to be delicious. Have not besieged correspondents been amusing their readers for some weeks past by relating the many experiments the once so fastidious Parisians have been trying as to the edibility of various animals hitherto considered to be exclusively confined to the table of a luxurious Chinaman or a Crimean Zouave? One resident reports cat-flesh exquisite; while another falls into ecstasies over the delicacy and flavor of a *salmis des rats*, which, however, he adds, was put down in his bill under the now comprehensive title of *gibier*. Ass-flesh is reported to be superior to veal; horse roasted and then pickled for some days is capital beef; dog is by no means unpalatable; and a roast mouse is matchless eating.

Not only, however, have the beleaguered Parisians been testing the flavor and digestibility of these familiar animals, but the Zoological Gardens have also furnished them with still stranger meats. Those hungry ostriches which you were expressly forbidden to feed, and which, consequently, were stuffed to suffocation by the more youthful of the *habitués*, have themselves been slaughtered, while the revered missionary of Timbuctoonian memory, so basely devoured by a cassowary, has been amply revenged by the fate of his antagonist's representatives at the Jardin des Plantes. Yak, kangaroo, and monkey have been procurable; the hams of the bear, so unjustly abused by M. Dumas in his "Impressions de Voyage," have been speculated on with great gusto; while buffalo-steak has been discussed at a select party of besieged epicureans, and pronounced most excellent eating.

Beef and mutton have long been rationed by the government at a very reasonable tariff, though in infinitesimal portions; but poultry, scarcely indeed obtainable, has sold for enormous prices. Thus the sketch on the left represents a scene witnessed on the Pont Neuf. An old lady, bent on making the most of the last of her poultry-yard, proclaimed the bird, estimated by a by-stander to be a veteran of at least eight years' standing, to be "the last cock in Paris," and, though admitting him to be no chicken, declared him not so old as represented, and stated his price to be 25 francs. A rabbit and two hens were also in her basket, the whole being valued at 59 francs. The lot was easily sold at the old lady's own price.

Milk also has been rare during the siege, and though it is stated that there are 6000 milch cows in Paris, this beverage is by no means easy to procure. Thus, as the second sketch depicts, no sooner do the milk-carts arrive from the Bois de Boulogne, or from some other oasis outside the ramparts where large herds of cattle are kept, than crowds of thirsty souls surround them, struggling to obtain, at any price, a small basin of this grateful liquid, made still more simple by the addition of considerable quantities of *aqua pura*. Rarely does the peasant escape till all his milk be gone, and a correspondent writes that "this scrambling frequently ends in half the milk being upset in the road. Those who have regular customers," he adds, "are obliged to change their itinerary every two or three days, or their cans would be dry before they arrived at the first house. We shall soon be without milk, as all cows are to be killed unless the proprietors can prove they have fodder enough to keep them for a month."

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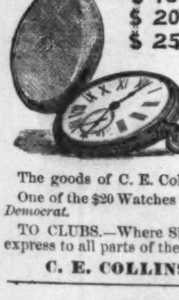

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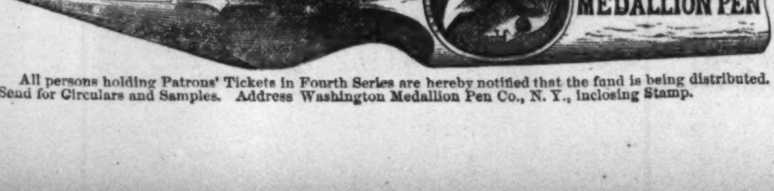

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SUPPLEMENT
TO
HARPER'S
WEEKLY
BLUE BEARD.
RED RIDING HOOD
TOM THUMB.
SANTA CLAUS
Th. Nast
1870
PUSS IN BOOTS.
PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN
CINDERELLA.

A HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS-EVE.

The following is a very old Christmas carol, once extensively known in England, and still a great favorite in many parts of that country:

As Joseph was a-walking
he heard an angel sing—
This night shall be the birth-time
of Christ the heavenly King.
He neither shall be born
in housen nor in hall,
Nor in the place of paradise,
but in an ox's stall:

He neither shall be clothed
in purple nor in pall,
But in the linen white and fair
that usen babies all;
He neither shall be rocked
in silver nor in gold,
But in a wooden manger rude
that resteth on the mould:

He neither shall be washen
with white wine nor with red,
But with the water from the spring
that on you shall be shed.
As Joseph was a-walking
thus did the angel sing,
And Mary's son at midnight hour
was born to be our King.

Then be ye glad, good people,
this night of all the year,
And light ye up your candles, for
his star it shineth clear;
And all in earth and heaven
a joyous carol sing,
For lo! to us a child is born,
and all the bells do ring!

APPLES OF SODOM.

A Christmas Story.

ALL night long the snow had been falling steadily, and when the sun arose on Christmas morning it seemed almost inclined to go back again, the air was so crisp and frosty. If the sun had any such half-formed intention, however, the idea was not executed, for the round red ball rolled slowly above the horizon line, and stared around upon the white surface spread before it, as if aghast at the amount of work it had to do to warm such a cold earth. An early bird, if any had been stirring, would have seen the long line that marked out Broadway, extending, in appearance like a piece of white tape, through the length of New York. Broadway was very quiet that Christmas morning; even the milkmen had not started on their noisy trips, and the over-night loungers had all apparently found warm places of repose, and had not ventured out of them yet. No stores were open, no pedestrians were abroad—every body was asleep.

Meanwhile the red ball rose higher and higher, and gradually its influence began to be felt: by the white roofs that lined the white streets, and little drops of water began to perspire from their edges, and roll over on to the sidewalks; by the frosty windows, and they became gradually more transparent; by the life of the city, and gradually it began to stir. First a window went up, a night-capped head peered out, and then popped in again; then a door opened, and great-coat and muffler issued forth; then the tinkling of bells was heard, and a horse appeared, panting and smoking, while the discordant scream of the milkman startled the silence—and New York was awake.

In a narrow lane, between two narrow streets on the east side of the city, stood a tall, thin structure, which seemed as if it had been wedged in between the two fat houses on either side of it to separate them, and had been forgotten there. It was a crazy old house—one of those that grow up in the heart of every great city, and, living a neglected and forsaken life, are not missed when they decay. It was full of windows, and every window seemed stuffed with old hats and coats and bits of cloth; and the blinds had all been wrenched off, and the doors hung loosely from their hinges; and altogether it presented a most miserable and dilapidated appearance. But there was one comparatively bright feature even about this unfortunate old relic. Away up in the top story the early bird could have seen one window that was not stuffed with old clothes and rags, albeit it was as shattered as any of the rest. Every broken pane in this window had a thin piece of wood tacked neatly over it, and though this plan excluded some of the light, it kept the cold out also, and looked less slatternly, and that was a great deal where every thing was dirty and slovenly and wretched. But there were a few panes of glass carefully preserved in this window, and through these the first rays of this Christmas sun poured with their full glory. There was nothing remarkable about the room which thus received a share of the Christmas sun—which shines alike for broken-down old tenement-houses and rich mansions—but its neatness. The furniture was old and common, but whole and clean. A pine table, dresser, bedstead, and a few chairs, that was all—all except a little, cold, cheerless stove, which, as it is destined to play an important part in this story, deserves and shall receive special description.

It was a funny little stove, made of sheet-iron, and having a little pipe with a matter-of-fact kind of elbow that twisted up into the chimney as if it only did so on compulsion and under protest. There was no fire in it, and it stood there looking cold and black, yet with a cheerful expression as the sun glistened on its smooth sides, while, the cover being off, it stared straight up to the ceiling through its large round eye, like a little square, black, inanimate Cyclops.

On the iron bedstead lay the figure of an old man. He was asleep, and the sun, shining full upon him, lined out his shape upon the coarse counterpane with marvelous distinctness. From the soft, thin, gray hair down to the very boots he wore it was all sharp; not the sharpness of acuteness; not the sharpness of meanness; but the stinging, biting sharpness of extreme poverty. He was a very old man. He did not seem as if he had grown sharp by years of suffering and pinching, but rather as though he had been suddenly clutched in a corner by distress, and had all the blood and flesh and marrow crushed out of him at once, and so had fallen asleep at midsummer and lain there until Christmas. For he lay on the bed with all his clothes on, and his nose and his fingers looked as if all the cold weather since October had been at work bluing him. After all, however, he had only lain there a few hours, as we shall see by-and-by.

There was a rough old Boston rocker standing tipped back against the wall beside the bed, and in it, crouched up in a heap, with little that seemed human about it, was another sleeping figure, that of a boy—judging by size and clothes—though the same frosty fingers and the same nipping poverty had evidently pinched all of youth out of the thin, pitiful face, and left the blue sign-manual, that was so obvious in the older man, to tell the story.

There came a clumping and stamping up the rickety stairs, and presently the door flew open with a bang to admit the form of a jolly, red-headed Irishman, whose cheerful, radiant face seemed to counteract the chill of the cold blast that blew in through the open door. He made noise enough in his entrance to have awakened the Sleeping Beauty; but though the old man started bolt-upright on the bed, and the shapeless mass of humanity in the Boston rocker rolled on the floor, neither seemed any the less asleep by these changes of position. "Hulloh, Old Chestnuts! Wake up, Boot-black!" shouted the new-comer; and he presented his foot to the figure on the floor, and his fist to the old man, with one and the same movement. Slowly the two took upright positions, and, stretching and yawning, awakened. The figure rising from the floor assumed the proportions of a young man, who might have been of any age from twenty to fifty, as far as his face was an index of his years, but was probably not far from the former. He was very tall and very thin, and, like the other, very sharp; yet, now that he was awake, there was to be seen a something fresh and young in his eye, a cheerful curl to his mouth, that evidenced a genial, youthful feeling smouldering under the surface. He rubbed his sides, twisted himself into various ungainly positions, blew his fingers, and then grinned broadly at the rough salutation of the Irishman, looking as pleasant as if he had just crept from a warm feather-bed this Christmas morning, and was standing before a blazing fire examining the contents of his stocking.

"I'm awake, Andy," said he. "You needn't make such a row. What's the matter, father?" he added, and, walking over to the old man, took him by the shoulders and gave him several affectionate but brisk shakes, which resulted in fully arousing him; then, sitting down in front of the stove, he proceeded to build a fire therein, stuffing it with shavings and bits of wood until it seemed ready to burst.

Barty Blandy, short for Bartimeus Blandy, Esq., as he had once been called, was reduced in circumstances—that is to say, while he had once been a thriving fruit-seller in Water Street, had lived in his own house, plainly but comfortably, he was now engaged in following the not very lucrative business of a peripatetic chestnut vendor, though peripatetic only so far as carrying his wares from his present abode to the locality selected for his day's traffic. He had been one of those easy-going men who are always about to do something, and never do it; so he was always going to have his little shop and stock insured, but he never did; and one cold winter's night, about ten years before this Christmas of our story, the fruit establishment took fire, and when Bartimeus went to open his shop next morning he found no shop to open.

After that calamity the old man had an interval of total blankness, as far as mental activity was concerned, for a period of about six weeks; and, when he was able to get about again, it was noticeable that there was a periodical tendency to aberration, which took rather an original shape. He had formed one idea, amounting to a conviction, that his future fortune lay in the direction of chestnuts, and to chestnuts he immediately and ever after devoted himself with great vigor and pertinacity. But he had also harbored another delusion, to the effect that he was a veteran of 1812, and liable to be called upon to parade at a moment's notice. To these twin ideas he clung with undeviating tenacity.

Thus the old man sold his chestnuts daily, deriving, however, quite an addition to the family income through the industry of his son, the young man whom we left building a fire in the comical little stove.

Cheeny Blandy, diminutive for Patchin—so named in honor of a distant relative of his deceased mother, of Hibernian extraction—was the only offspring of the Blandy couple. When the unfortunate accident occurred which placed the worthy fruit merchant at the mercy of a cold world, the hidden virtues of the youthful Cheeny made themselves known. The conflagration having destroyed considerable stock which had been purchased on credit, it became necessary to dispose of the major part of Mr. Blandy's possessions, and Cheeny, though only ten years old, found himself equal to the emergency. Selling their snug little dwelling and most of their furniture to pay their debts, which, as is usual in such cases, were found to surpass his wildest anticipations, Cheeny moved his sick father to the little room they had ever since occupied. It was not until the recovery of the old man that they were enabled to earn enough to support them, and they were forced to depend in some measure upon the charity of their friends. But when that had occurred, and the father was able to get about again, Cheeny got the necessary stock in trade and utensils, including the little stove, which had to be transported daily to and from the old man's business locality, and he was fairly set up in trade. As for Cheeny, he determined to devote himself to any thing that might come handiest, and as boot-blacking seemed to offer as good a field for the exercise of his talents as any thing, he used the first profits accruing from the chestnut sales to purchase the necessary tools.

Every morning, after establishing his father at some comfortable corner, Cheeny went the rounds of his customers; and every evening, after transporting the chestnut-merchant and his appurtenances to the room in the wedged-in tenement, the boy would again go through a select circle of gentlemen who patronized the opera and theatre. Thus, by the economy and cheerful industry of Cheeny, and the unwearied labors of the old man, they lived very comfortably for two or three years. But after that time, to the surprise and consternation of Cheeny, the proceeds of his father's daily traffic gradually became diminished. Had the demand for chestnuts ceased? Other dealers appeared to flourish, and the old man's stock seemed always to be disposed of. He gave as an explanation for the falling-off of his returns sometimes one reason sometimes another. He had sold off at a low price, for fear of having his stock remain on his hands; he had lost the money; some rude boy had overturned his stand. He never drank, and he showed no signs of having expended the money in any other way; so poor Cheeny, loth to suspect his father, or even to question him, only worked the harder, and waited for the future to elucidate the mystery. Sometimes he tried to induce the old man to change his business; suggested apples and candy; but no! the old man had but one idea on this subject, and that was chestnuts, and to chestnuts he stuck, like their own burs. Now it is a remarkable fact in natural history that the American chestnut is only marketable in autumn and winter; and as Barty Blandy's national prejudices would not admit of his dealing in foreign wares, the result was that during the summer months his labors were more apparent than real, and this period was usually devoted to the development of his second original idea or aberration, that he was a veteran of 1812.

Though Barty was old enough to have belonged to that interesting and warlike corps, yet for various reasons he could not legitimately claim the honored title. Chief among these was the fact that he had always been of so peaceful a cast of character that nothing short of coercion could have ever induced him to adopt a soldier's life. Further, at the period celebrated by the pompous and martial souls who perambulate Broadway on Evacuation-day in all their glory, Barty was a farmer's son in the interior of Maine, where rumors of wars never reached him. However, it is a lamentable fact that one of Cheeny's most onerous duties at this season was the repressing of the old man's anxious desire to parade among the veterans, or, in default of that, independently. Cheeny occasionally obtained a situation in a store; but perhaps, after he had held it for a few days, he would be suddenly called from his duties to behold the awful spectacle of his father marching stiffly into the store with a broomstick on his shoulder, and calling loudly on "Patchin!" This would never answer in a well-regulated establishment, and after a few such experiences Cheeny would lose his situation.

But the poor can almost always live in the warm summer months; it is when the cruel winter comes on that they suffer most.

Of late years these fits had not confined themselves to the summer, and once or twice Cheeny had been obliged to extricate his father from the station-house, where he had been incarcerated as a vagrant—a disgrace very hard for the poor lad to bear.

This winter they had suffered much. Cheeny had shoveled snow, put in coal, blacked boots, and, in fact, done every thing possible to keep from starving; but the old man was evidently failing. Andy, the Irishman, was a generous old soul, and had occasionally helped them to the extent of his means; and so it had gone on until Christmas-eve. Barty had been selling chestnuts all day, and late into the night. Cheeny had made the crisp air ring with his shouts of "Oysters!—Buy any oysters?" until his voice was cracked. He had wandered into Broadway, and as he struggled through the crowd with his little pail he saw the richly dressed and comfortable-looking gentlemen and ladies, and young girls and healthy boys, riding and walking, laughing and shouting. He saw the bright windows crowded with books and toys and all beautiful things, and the brilliant lights glancing through the frost on the glass; and so he had wandered on, with his heart full and his eyes full—for he was only a boy, in spite of his twenty years—until the snow began to come down in big white flakes, and then he turned about and hurried after the old man. Barty was cold and querulous; he said he had sold very little that day, and for a wonder much of his stock was left; so Cheeny put out the fire in the little stove, shouldered his heavy load, and plodded on, wearied and miserable.

It was now very late; the snow fell silently and heavily; the few persons out passed rapidly along with muffled footsteps; and when father and son reached their little room it was midnight, for the bell of a neighboring church sounded the hour with a heavy clang, and afar off could be heard the sweet chimes of Trinity awakening the echoes in memory of the birthday of the Saviour.

They were so tired when they got in that they dropped asleep where they fell; and there, as we have seen, Andy found them on Christmas morning; and so we return to the group we left in the little tenement-room. Cheeny was making the fire with his last remaining bundle of wood, and as it brightened up the room assumed a more comfortable appearance. But the old man sat upon the side of the bed, humming a far-away little ditty, and looking straight out of the window, without seeing, however, even the snow that lay banked up so heavily on the roofs of the houses opposite.

"An' what hev ye got fur breakfass?" said Andy. "It's little I see about, any way." Cheeny reddened, and going over to the dresser opened it, and took therefrom a loaf of bread and a plate of cold meat. These he laid on the table, and helping his father to a chair, seated himself, and was preparing to eat, when Andy broke in: "Wait a bit!" said he; "I've got a Christmas prisent fur ye, bedad!" And he clumped out of the room and down the narrow staircase without further words.

In a few moments he returned, bringing with him a little pot of coffee, a luxury the Blandys had not tasted for many a long day. With this addition to his bill of fare Cheeny made a comfortable breakfast, but the old man would taste nothing. Andy went away to his own establishment, and Cheeny, after seeing his father as well disposed of as was possible under the circumstances—for he seemed too ill to go out—started off to shovel snow; for though he had breakfasted, it was yet but an hour or two after sunrise. The old man took his seat on the bedstead, and remained staring out of the window as before.

Hours went by, and there was no movement in the little room; then, suddenly rising, the old man moved unsteadily toward the dresser, and seemed to search for something. Presently he found an old school-book, and tearing from it a blank leaf, took a lead-pencil from his pocket, and slowly scrawled something on it, folded it up, and laid it on the table; then, taking his position on the bed, he sat as before, but with his head bowed upon his breast, his hands clasped over his knees, and his face completely hidden. Meanwhile the fire in the little stove went out. Colder and colder grew the air; far below could be heard the merry tinkling of sleigh-bells and the glad shouts of children. Again the poor bent figure roused itself, but a sad change had gone over it. The face was long and blue and pinched; the eyes, sunk deep under the wrinkled brows, could hardly be seen; but something terrible—some fearful thought, dimly struggling toward the light, had startled him. Slowly dropping on the floor, for he was very weak, he crawled to the little stove; he paused there a moment; then he seized it as if in a frenzy, overturned it, and with his trembling, emaciated hands drew out a clumsily made yet quite hidden slide from one corner of the bottom. Inserting his hand, he took from the cavity a small tin box, which he eagerly opened: it contained nothing but a few bits of charred paper. With a bound the old man was on his feet; his eyes dilated; he grasped at his throat, and struggled for breath. A sudden fall—not very heavy—and the old chestnut-seller was dead.

Hours passed by; all was still in the little room, save that at regular intervals there could have been heard a steady drop, dropping upon the floor, and right below the old man's head, as it rested on his knee, there grew to be a round pool of cold black blood.

It was long past noon when a slow step ascended the staircase; the door opened, and Cheeny entered.

He saw it all! The dead old father, for whom he had toiled so many long and weary years; the little stove, as it lay overturned by his side; the dark pool of blood; and last, the folded paper on the table. He mechanically stepped forward and opened it. This is what it contained:

"*For seven years, Cheeny, I have robbed us both to save for you. My time is up. Pull out the left-hand lower corner of the stove, and you will find enough to keep you when you haven't your poor old father to drag on you.*"

The little box lay with its blackened contents on the floor, and the old man's mystery was solved at last.

Slowly the lad sank down beside his father—and the room was still. Still through the long afternoon—still through the cold, dark Christmas night; and when the round red sun arose the next morning it was yet still, for there was no life there. There was only the dead father and the dead son, and the little stove with the dead fire.

THE HOUSE OF BOURBON.

IF length of descent is a thing to be proud of, there ought to be no prouder family in Europe than that of Bourbon. Not only can they trace their line unbroken to Hugh Capet, the strong-handed putter-down of a degenerate dynasty, but it leads through thirty generations of kings, interrupted here and there, where a stream breaks off, to run through banks studded with castles of honor only just short of royal. Hugh Capet is the first. From him the line runs uninterruptedly till we come to Louis the Ninth, the saint. The direct trunk here carries on the race of kings, which terminated in the children of Philip the Fair, and gave place to the house of Valois. After their failure of male issue, the Bourbons come in. Robert, sixth son of Louis the Ninth, married Beatrix, heiress of that noble fief of Bourbon which lay in the centre of France, north of Auvergne and Guienne. From him sprang eight dukes of Bourbon—a stalwart, hard-fisted race, who were ever to the fore when fighting was going on, and always loyal to the crown, in good times and bad.

Antoine de Bourbon—a poor, irresolute creature, "the prince *ans gloire*," who never knew which side he was fighting for, nor which relig-

ion he belonged to; dying, indeed, in a grievous perplexity whether he ought to call himself Catholic or Protestant—had the great good luck to marry Jeanne d'Albret, daughter to the King of Navarre and his wife, Margaret of Valois, the author of the "Heptameron," and protector of all the speculators and free-thinkers of her free-thinking age. By greater luck still, he had for an only son the jolliest, if not greatest, of French kings—their fourth Henry—whose succession put the Bourbon family, for the first time, on the throne of France. His claims were threefold. Through his father, he sprang direct from Louis the Ninth; through his mother, from Charles the Fifth; and through his maternal great-grandfather from Louis the Tenth. In the next generation but one, the race splits up again. The brother of Louis the Fourteenth, the Duke of Orleans, was the first of the Orleans branch, which now survives in the children and grandchildren of Louis Philippe.

The Count de Chambord, the last surviving descendant in the direct line, is now fifty years of age, has been long married, without children. He is supported by a very small following in France, who adhere to him from principle, and who will transfer their allegiance to the Orleans family as soon as he is out of the way. From time to time he puts his name to a document, which is drawn up and published to let people know he is still alive, and their king by divine right; but it may very reasonably be supposed that he has long since given up all hopes of succeeding to the crown. He seems to have inherited that character which is occasionally reproduced in the Bourbon family, of which the type is the indecisive and vacillating Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henry the Fourth. Such was Louis the Thirteenth; such Louis the Dauphin; such Louis the Sixteenth. Their energy and bravery are dashed by a fatal hesitation; they dare, but they think too long about daring; they resolve, but too late; they act, when the time for action is past.

The Orleans branch has been in exile for twenty-two years, and has shown how adversity may be borne without loss of dignity. They have spent their time in travel, in study, in writing; and they have shown that, in intellect at least, there is one branch of the grand old house which is still ready to go to the front.

A TALE OF TWO CHRISTMASES.

I.

"So you're determined not to come and spend the Christmas vac. with us?"

"My dear old boy, if I do, it's good-by to my chance of a first, and therefore a long farewell to my hope of a fellowship."

The first speaker was Walter Carew, heir to one of the richest baronetcies in wealthy Beeveshire, and gentleman commoner of St. Guthlac's College, Oxford, on which fine old foundation his friend Charlie Brandreth was a scholar.

"Well, then, at all events you'll come and stay somewhere handy, so that you can spend your Christmas and New-Year's Day with us?"

"To have you come and chevy me off my work every day?" said Brandreth.

"No; 'pon honor, I won't. There's a farm of the governor's at Bishop's Climstoke, five miles from the nearest station, and that's an hour and a half from us. They're excellent people, and will put you up capitally, and for a moderate screw. Say yes, and I'll write to old Dimsdale about it by this evening's post."

"It is a tempting idea. Are you sure there is nothing about the locality to keep a fellow from reading?"

"Not more than any other place on this jolly sphere. You know I'm no judge. As my old coach used to say, the only place where I should be likely to stick to reading would be Eddystone Light-house, and then I should have to promise not to fish."

"Well, I confess, with all my anxiety for a class, I don't quite like the notion of Christmas-day in Oxford and solitude; so I'll say yes."

The upshot of this conversation was that the beginning of the Christmas vac. found Brandreth comfortably settled at Dovecote Farm, in the retired little village of Bishop's Climstoke. He found the Dimsdales very agreeable people, and rather superior to his notion of farmer life. The family consisted of old Dimsdale, an honest and energetic man, his wife, a very homely and easy-going body, and Rose, their daughter, a girl of about eighteen, and pretty enough to deserve to be, what Brandreth soon discovered that she was, the belle of Bishop's Climstoke.

Brandreth had been thrown on the world an orphan at an early age, with no kith or kin save an old bachelor uncle, who was his guardian until he came of age—an event which had taken place a couple of years before the date of this story. He had, therefore, never known womanly kindness or attention; and the care and thought which Rose bestowed on him as their visitor came upon him with no less novelty than enjoyment. She, on the other hand, having been all her life accustomed only to the awkward homage of rustic admirers, was charmed with the refined and respectful attention which Brandreth naturally paid to a woman.

It was hardly likely that such a state of feeling should remain at a fixed point, and it was scarcely probable that it would suffer diminution. It naturally deepened and strengthened. Brandreth, with a man's instinct of rivalry, could not bear to see a girl like Rose surrounded by such clowns as her village suitors; and taking advantage of his position as a visitor at her father's house, he contrived on all occasions to monopolize her, much to the chagrin of her rustic swains, but greatly to her satisfaction.

Poor Rose! her guileless and unsophisticated nature saw no wrong, no danger, no inequality in their love. How could she fail to believe and return what she supposed to be an honest and honorable passion? What else could his attentions mean?

And now it was Christmas-eve, and he was about to start for Sir Ranulph Carew's, to spend his Christmas. Poor girl! though the separation would only be for a day, it seemed as if it was to be for ages. It was her first experience of the bitters of love.

She stood in the hall, waiting to see him off, with a sad heart, which sorely hindered her in her appointed task—the decoration of the old farm-house with evergreens.

At last Brandreth came down stairs equipped for his journey, which was likely to prove a cold one, as the winter had begun to set in severely.

"Good-by, Rosie! A merry Christmas to you," said he, cheerfully.

"And to you too," said she, but in no very merry tone.

"So you're doing the decorations, eh? I shall take the privilege of the season."

He caught up a bit of mistletoe, and holding it over her head bent down and kissed her.

It was the first time he had ever kissed her, and it should have been pleasant therefore. But it was not. As he drove away toward the station he recalled it again and again, but with an uncomfortable feeling, a self-reproachful dread.

Shall I tell you why? Because, when he stooped down to kiss her, she had not turned her head away or tried to escape. She had raised her face calmly and innocently and met his lips with hers. It was so simply and trustfully done that there was nothing unmaidenly in the action. It shocked him because it was a revelation—in that kiss she had given him her heart. He felt he was a villain. He had won the poor child's affection by false pretense. He had blighted her happiness merely to gratify his vanity; for, of course, as he kept repeating to himself, there could be nothing between them, their stations in life were so very different.

The line between the station at which he entered the train and that near Sir Ranulph's seat ran close to the village of Bishop's Climstoke; and as he was whirled rapidly by it, and recognized many a familiar spot, his heart grew sad to think what evil he had wrought in that quiet hamlet, and to the poor trusting girl who had given him her heart.

Before long, however, he found himself at Sir Ranulph's hospitable mansion, where, in the pleasure of meeting Walter, and in the jollity of the season, he soon forgot his remorse, and dismissed the subject of his cruelty from his mind.

It was a thoroughly old-fashioned Christmas, kept up in the regular old-fashioned style. When the Yule-log that was drawn in by a party of mummers was laid on the capacious hearth, and began to blaze, it was not only the sap that hissed. There were big flakes of snow coming down the wide chimney, and they sputtered and steamed as they fell on the hot log.

A week passed pleasantly enough, and perhaps only too quickly. It required all Brandreth's resolution to make up his mind to tear himself away and get back to his books. His difficulty in doing so was not decreased by the fact that his friend's only sister, Edith, showed a decided partiality for him, which Walter was only too delighted to foster, and upon which Brandreth could not help fancying neither her father nor mother looked with any displeasure.

However, by a strong effort he resisted the spell, and on the day after New-Year's Day found himself in the train on the return journey to Bishop's Climstoke. As he passed the village the recollection of what had happened when he left it came back to him again vividly. He could not help reproaching himself for his attentions to Edith as a treason to Rose. And yet, after all, how could that be? Rose and he were so differently situated it was absurd to think of any thing serious between them!

But when he arrived at the farm he found the Dimsdales in sore distress and tribulation. Rose had gone that morning early to visit her grandmother in the next village, which lay four miles off across the moor. At mid-day—though Brandreth had been too much occupied with his thoughts to notice it—there had been a blinding snow-storm of long duration, and Rose had not yet returned. They had waited and hoped until the lateness of the hour had driven them to acknowledge the fear that they had not ventured to hint to each other—she must have lost her way in the snow!

The whole village was out in search of her, but the moor was a wide one, full of gullies and water-courses, and the peril was extreme, the Dimsdales said.

Almost before they had finished speaking Brandreth had seized his hat and stick and hurried out. He did not know the moor at all, but he felt that he would find her. He must find her or die, he said to himself, and then wondered what this violent feeling meant.

He could see lanterns moving about on all sides, and heard at intervals one party of searchers shouting to another. He strode on in darkness and in silence.

His ignorance of the moor did what the villagers' intimate acquaintance with it failed to do. They searched on and about the different paths. He went blindly on, now plunging into holes, now falling over ridges.

At last the ground seemed to open under him—he felt himself falling into space. He could scarcely smother a cry. But the sensation had been deceptive—he had merely plunged into a water-course. But as he turned to scramble out again he saw a shred of gray cloth in the snow. He knew it—it was Rose's cloak. He threw himself on his knees, and began madly tearing the snow away with his hands.

Yes, it was she! But was she asleep—or dead? He raised her from her cold couch, and taking off his cloak and coat wrapped them round her. As he was taking off the latter he felt something in his pocket. Thank God! it was the brandy-flask Walter had pressed on him when he started. He contrived to pour a little between her pale, motionless lips; then catching her up, with a strength which surprised him even at the time, he strode back along his clearly marked track, covering her poor cold face with showers of warm kisses, and addressing her in the fondest terms of endearment.

It would be vain to attempt to picture the joy and the gratitude of the Dimsdales at recovering their daughter, who, thanks to her warm wrappings and the brandy, had already begun to show signs of returning consciousness when Brandreth, almost wearied out with his exertions, came staggering into the farm-house with her in his arms.

But, wearied as he was, that night he did not sleep a wink. He lay awake, trying, as he had tried on the moor, to make out the road before him. Did he love Rose? Could he make her his wife? And the spirit of pride was strong in him, and early in the morning he packed up his things, bade good-by to Mr. and Mrs. Dimsdale, left a farewell for Rose, and went back to Oxford.

II.

When he had recovered from the fever by which he was prostrated immediately on his return to Oxford, Charles Brandreth set to work with unabated zeal at his studies.

The examination arrived; and when the list came out the name of "Brandreth, Carolus, e Coll. Sti. Guth.," was in the First Class. He took his degree, and in another term had arrived at the height of his ambition—a fellowship. But somehow all his success failed to make him happy. He had lost his pleasant old smile, as his friend Walter complained, and then wondered whether his old chum Charlie was wretched to think he had not proposed to Edith, to whom the young Earl of Marston was now paying suit with apparently every chance of success.

So—the year having now come nearly to an end—Walter determined to ask Brandreth down once again for the Christmas. "Who knows," said he to himself, "but he may cut the earl out? He shall have my assistance any how!"

He could not prevail for some time upon his friend to accept the invitation; and it was not until he declared he should interpret his refusal as a desire to bring their friendship to a close that he got Brandreth to promise to come. But even then he would not come an hour earlier than Christmas-eve.

So Brandreth made his arrangements for the journey. And the recollections of the same time last year, and of the Dimsdales, and dear old Bishop's Climstoke came back to him fresh and bright. In a gracious mood he set himself down and wrote to old Dimsdale, wishing him and his family the compliments of the season. And then, just as he was closing his letter, something came over him, and he added:

"I shall be able to utter the wish almost within your hearing, for I am going down by the evening mail on Christmas-eve to spend a short time at Sir Ranulph Carew's."

You may be sure the letter was a pleasant surprise at Dovecote Farm. For the simple-minded old people never connected Charles Brandreth with the sadness and gloom that had come over Rose, that had stolen the color from her cheeks and the light from her eyes, and that made her sigh and go heavily, like one weary of life. They only thought of him as the preserver of their darling; and they fancied the change in her was due to the shock she had received when she was lost in the snow.

"Why, dame!" said the farmer, brightening, "'tis a letter fro' our Mr. Brandreth."

"A cursed jackanapes!" came in a growl from a dark corner.

The farmer turned—it was only Black Dick, as he was called in the village, an ill-favored lad, not many degrees removed from an idiot or a brute. He used to hang about poor Rose, much to her horror, making a display of slavish admiration for her that was almost revolting.

"What's wrong wi' thee, Dick?" said the farmer.

"'A thrashed oi onst—on'y for carr'in a bit misletoe in ma pocket to catch Rosey wi'!"

"Served you right, too!" said Mrs. Dimsdale, who shared Rose's loathing for the creature. "And what says Mr. Brandreth, father?"

"He's coming down here to stay 'long of the Carews, and 'll wish us a merry Christmas as he passes along the line o' Christmas-eve by the mail train. Here's a merry Christmas to *him*, eh, dame?"

Mrs. Dimsdale heartily joined in the wish; and then they began to talk of his stay at the farm, and about Rose's rescue; and they did not notice the malicious grin with which Black Dick stole out of the kitchen after hearing the news contained in the postscript of Charles Brandreth's letter.

"Cursed jackanapes!" he muttered to himself, as he went pounding across the frosty meadows in the direction of the railway; "who but he 'as bruk Rosey's heart? Who but he 'as teuk the maid away from oos honest village maates? An' 'a thrashed oi too! But I'll be even wi' un!"

III.

There was no moon on Christmas-eve, but the stars were bright in the frosty sky, and the clear surface of the thin sheet of snow that had fallen in the morning reflected what little light there was.

The throb and rattle of the train that rushed so rapidly along, bearing him toward Bishop's Climstoke, seemed to fall into a regular rhythm, and his imagination, heated by remorseful memories, seemed to supply it with words,

"Ruthless traitor! Ruthless traitor!"

The words rang continuously in his ears. He could not shut them out by reading. They were like the sounds that repeat themselves with such maddening monotony to a man in delirium. He was positively grateful when he recognized by certain familiar landmarks that he was approaching Bishop's Climstoke. He opened the window and leaned out. Still the train hurried on. Now he could see the tower of the church. He was getting near the village now. He would see the farm in a minute.

Ah! what was that? Some black object moving down the side of the embankment a little way ahead. The engine-driver must have seen it, for hark! there is a warning whistle.

All of a sudden the tone of the whistle is changed. It becomes a shriek, as of terror. There follows a tremendous grinding of breaks hurriedly applied till the sparks rush from them in a stream. Then arise cries of alarm. And then, over all, a crash—the train heaves like a wounded snake; the carriages seem to fall into splinters. A grinding, crushing roar—the bellowing of escaping steam—the hissing of water flung upon live coals! All this compressed into a minute's space; and this the last thing of which Charles Brandreth is conscious!

Those of the guards who are uninjured set to work to learn how the accident rose, and to extricate the passengers. They find the line has been blocked with several sleepers and uptorn rails, which have thrown the engine off the track. It has been overturned in its fall. Stoker and driver have both been thrown some distance, and lie dead or insensible—it can not be clearly ascertained which just yet.

But there's some one under the engine, for all that! They can hear a faint moaning. Whoever it is, he's as good as dead, what with being crushed and burned and scalded all at the same time. They extricate him.

It is a young fellow, apparently a farm laborer. It is promptly conjectured that he is the person who placed the obstruction on the line; and when the question is put to him he does not deny it. Just at that moment they are carrying past the apparently lifeless body of one whose dress seems to indicate that he is a clergyman. A ghastly red cut across the face heightens its pallor. The by-standers acknowledged with a shudder the presence of death.

The wretched author of the calamity grins a terrible grin, half of agony, half of triumph.

"I be done for—but I ha' killed un!—I ha' killed un, for sure!"

And with that he falls writhing, and dies like a crushed viper.

And just then a big burly figure comes pushing through the crowd.

"Mr. Brandreth! Mr. Brandreth! Are you hurt? Where are you, Sir? Have ye any o' ye seen a clergy—"

And then he catches sight of the dead body, and all he can find breath to say is, "Oh, my God! he is dead!"

IV.

But Charles Brandreth was not dead. "Better he had been," he thinks when, after a long, lingering recovery from the worst, he learns from the doctor that he is hopelessly disfigured, and that he will be a deformed cripple for life!

He shudders and turns away from a gentle hand that is laid on his shoulder—oh, so softly! It does not put him to physical pain, but it racks him with mental torture. For there is the ghost of poor Rose—the spectre now of the pretty girl he knew—waiting on him, tending him, nursing him, patiently, devotedly, unwearyingly. But somehow he feels there is a barrier between them. Not the cruel old barrier of pride that he had built up. In his humiliation, in the silent hours of waking, in the constant school of pain, he has learned to see clearly now. The barrier is none of his raising. It is interposed between them by Rose. If he were the merest stranger she could not keep him more coldly at a distance, with her face emotionless as a mask, and her demure "Yes, Sir," and "No, Sir."

He prays for death; but he feels that he will live. And the thought of what life means to him now is unendurable.

One day when he is, as he supposes, alone, he complains aloud, reproaching himself for the past.

"I blighted her life, and mine is darkened. I killed the prettiness in her face, and mine is made a horror. I deserve it; and yet it is sad to think of the doom the doctor passes—a disfigured, deformed cripple for life!"

And then suddenly he feels two arms round his neck, and a shower of kisses on his forehead, and he hears Rosie's voice sobbing: "My darling! my darling! Yes, I dare to call you so now—my own! my own! Dearer to me now than ever!—doubly dear, for they will not steal you from me now!"

"Merciful Heaven! what have I done to deserve this?" he gasps.

And from that day he begins to mend fast.

* * * * * *

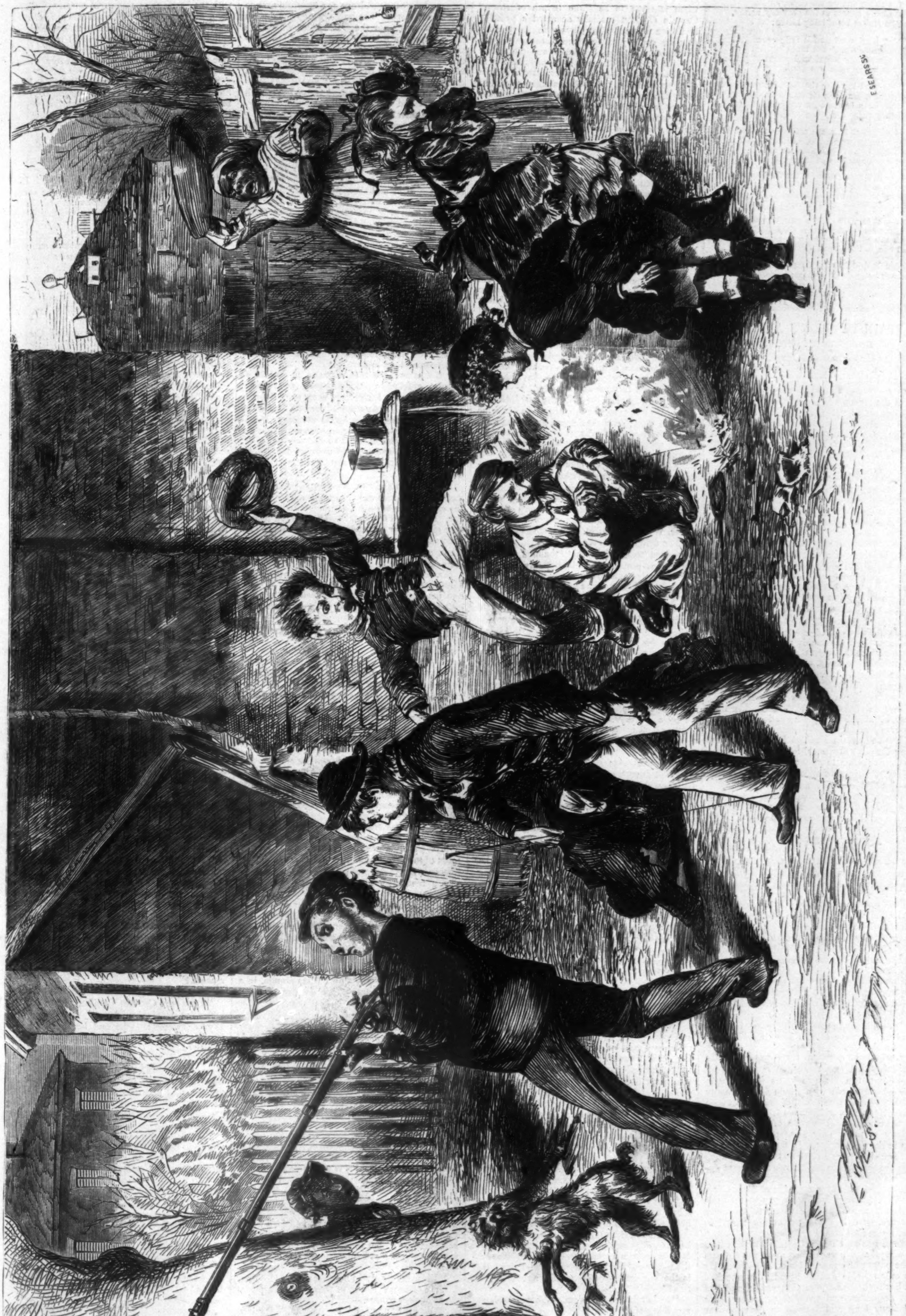
There is little more to add, but that little is good.

Sir Ranulph, dissatisfied with the opinion of the local surgeon, sends to town for the first surgeon of the day, who comes down with his cheerful face and his noble gray head—grown gray in the service of suffering humanity—and he takes a brighter view of the case, and a more correct one, which is better still.

For, by the time Charles Brandreth is well enough to move about again, and goes to take the fat college living for which he exchanges his fellowship, you would never guess from his straight, well-proportioned figure that he had ever been such a shattered wreck as he has been. There's just the shadow of a limp in his walk, and there's the white seam of a long scar on his brow, but you can only see it when you are very near him.

But Rose, his beloved wife, who is nearer—and dearer—to him than any one else in the world, vows she can not see any thing of a disfigurement or any fault or imperfection at all in her husband.

CHRISTMAS IN THE SOUTH—EGG-NOG PARTY.—[DRAWN BY W. L. SHEPPARD.]



CHRISTMAS IN THE SOUTH—YOUNG FOLKS CELEBRATING THE DAY.—[DRAWN BY W. L. SHEPPARD.]

CHRISTMAS MORN.

"GOOD-WILL to all!" See, the gold rays fall
Of the rising sun on the eaves,
And the holly shakes as the glad day breaks,
And he rustles his shining leaves;

The thick berries red on his spike-crowned head
Nod welcome out to the morn
Of the day of days when, 'mid pæans of praise,
The Saviour of man was born.

The yews bend low o'er the drifted snow
And their green arms creak and sway,
As the ice-keen breeze stirs the grand old trees,
And they chant the hymn of the day.

"Good-will to all!" in the cottage small,
Where the brown-cheeked children shout;
"Good-will to all!" in the palace hall,
Where the greetings of kings ring out.

What though some tears for the dead gone years
Be mixed with our smiles to-night?
It is ever so on our earth below—
After darkness cometh light!

"Good-will to all!" And a guerdon small,
A silver fee for the poor;
Oh, on this glad day let us turn away
Not one, not *one*, from our door!

Your hands, dear friends! Thus the long year ends,
Let our petty discords cease;
The old year dies out 'mid our parting shout,
Let it go, let it go in peace!

CAPTAIN DENISON'S AFFINITY.

BY JUSTIN M'CARTHY.

CAPTAIN HUGO CHARLES DENISON was a genuine Briton. He was a young man of good heart, good abilities, more than average culture, and very shy and formal manners. After the close of the American civil war he came out to the United States, following a stream of his countrymen, anxious to get, for the first time, some actual and genuine knowledge about the extraordinary republic which had so strangely disturbed one of the British Philistine's cherished articles of faith by refusing to burst up according to all sound prediction and intuitive perception of British Philistinism. Now our captain was not by nature or training a Philistine; but he had some of the Philistine's prejudices about him, and he was especially settled in his mind as to the sphere and the duties of woman. Captain Hugo Denison hated the very mention of woman's rights. His idea of a well-bred and lady-like woman was that of a graceful and dignified person who rarely spoke, and when she did speak, uttered only some becoming commonplace, in which no investigation could detect an idea, and with which acrimony itself could not desire to quarrel. In fact, the properest thing a woman could do was to do nothing—or as little as possible—certainly to do nothing out of the common. A woman of conversational talent, displaying honestly her capacity, our captain would have set down in much the same category as a ballet-girl displaying her legs. In fact, no matter how useful or charming a woman's talents might be, they were, in Captain Denison's estimation, like her lower limbs, to be kept always from the public observation.

Of course Captain Denison knew that, when visiting the United States, he would be likely, some time or other, to meet some of the fair advocates of the rights of women. Indeed, he had something like a timid and morbid curiosity about them, as one has about seeing a ghost or a mangled body. He dreaded yet wished to meet a few of the creatures. He took it for granted that they all wore trowsers, and—well, let us say expectorated.

Captain Denison saw a little of the outer and inner life of two or three of the Eastern States, and was, like most Englishmen of any observation, a little disappointed on finding how very like the inner life, at least, was to that of Anglo-Saxon cities across the water. His letters of introduction brought him into the society of steady-going, respectable, mildly fashionable persons, who were in the habit of visiting England pretty often themselves, and had English ways about them. Captain Denison sat at many dinner-tables in New York which were splendid and quiet and formal and stupid enough even for London. On general subjects the opinions he heard expressed quite coincided with his own, and he now thought he clearly understood why the Northern States were great in war. "They are just like ourselves," Denison said to himself, with satisfaction and pride.

Sometimes the question of woman's rights was broached, and Captain Denison found that on this subject, too, his own views were exactly those of the people with whom he commonly mixed. Women who talked of their rights were necessarily coarse, vulgar, hard, indecent, and unsexed creatures. None of his friends had ever met any of them, only saw something about them in the newspapers. In fact, though every one seemed to have a clear and decided opinion about the appearance and character of these women, yet the women did not seem to be visible in any place on which the sunshine of society ever shone, and Captain Denison began to set them down as a race of beings who led a subterranean existence, or only came out at night, and in dark, mysterious places.

Please don't set down Captain Denison as a fool or a prig. He was neither; had not a gleam of the nature of either in his composition. He was only an able and well-read man who had had but limited means of observation, and had class prejudices and national prejudices. He had many long and interesting conversations with some Americans well qualified to instruct him, and he was quite open to instruction on most subjects. One of the men he liked best and met oftenest of late was Julius Wynter, a retired merchant, who had a pleasant place far away in the country, whither he always fled when New York became hot and dull. Denison much liked both Mr. and Mrs. Wynter, and found pleasure and profit in their society. So when it came to be "the month of roses," Captain Denison cordially accepted a pressing invitation to spend a few days with the Wynters at their country place somewhere among the mountains. A day was fixed, and the visitor received an elaborate *carte du pays*. He was to go a certain distance by steamer, then a certain distance by railway, and then a carriage was to meet him and convey him on to Falconwood, the residence of his host and hostess.

By some mischance Captain Denison failed to get the steamer at the right hour, and so had to take an evening boat instead of one starting at noon. Therefore, of course, the whole programme of his arrival was deranged. When the Wynters' carriage came for him he was not there; when he got out of the railway cars no carriage awaited him. The Wynters assumed that he was not coming. Captain Denison stood, portmanteau in hand, at a low, half-finished railway station; there was no one to receive him; the day was hot, and Falconwood was six miles off.

There was only one vehicle of any kind near the station when Denison got out, and that was a pretty pony carriage. Denison at first had some hope that it might prove to be the carriage of his friends, and to be waiting for him but it was not so. A young lady got out of the train and into the carriage. She took the reins into her own hands from those of the black servant, who then went behind. A man of Captain Denison's age never fails, in whatever perplexity, to look at a young woman, and Denison saw, that this was a *petite*, pretty, bright-eyed creature with delicately formed features and fair hair.

Denison looked at the lady, the lady looked at him. He was evidently a stranger, and in some sort of a "fix;" and she delayed giving the word of departure to her ponies.

Our captain began to ask about the way to Falconwood, and the possibility of getting a carriage to go there, over which proposal the functionary at the station shook his head doubtfully. The lady in the pony carriage heard the discussion, and called out, in a clear, ringing voice, just perhaps a little, a very little, sharp of tone:

"Are you going to Falconwood, Sir? A friend of Mr. Wynter's? If so, I am going there, and shall be delighted to take you."

Denison took off his hat, thanked her, explained his position and his difficulty, and was of course only too happy to accept her offer. Girls in the old land don't invite strangers to drive with them, even when in the country; and Captain Denison, grateful and glad though he was, could not help thinking so. In this case, however, the difference of manners was so entirely to his advantage that he almost approved of it.

"Get right in, Sir," the young lady encouragingly said. Captain Denison accepted the invitation, not without making a mental note of the "right in" and the "Sir," which are unfamiliar words under such circumstances in England. He got right in, and sat next the pretty girl. Really she was very pretty, and even a stolid Briton—and Denison was nothing of the sort—must have been glad to sit by her side.

He offered, of course, to relieve her of the trouble of driving; but she declared, first, that he didn't know the way; next that the road was not easy, and the ponies were somewhat unmanageable for a stranger; finally, that she had taken the reins from the black servant because she specially liked to drive. So she shook the reins and they rattled away; and our Briton began to think his position at least as pleasant as it was decidedly odd.

The young lady had plenty of talk; and her talk was animated, original, and interesting. Captain Denison, despite his recorded admiration of stately silence in women, found himself much delighted with the voluble vivacity of this young woman; and, more than that, he began to be quite pleased with himself, and to recognize in himself conversational resources the existence whereof he had never before suspected. Delicious was the day, the atmosphere, the scene; the road lay through a beautiful country, through woodland green as that of his own Devonshire, through the foliage of cedar and tulip-tree and hickory and oak. His companion pointed his attention to every spot that was specially beautiful, had something interesting to say about this glade and that brook and yonder house among the trees, and had questions to ask of him about England's trees and landscape and social life, which she had not yet seen; and the conversation never flagged. In England Captain Denison always found it a heavy ordeal to have to talk to girls.

Something or other brought up an allusion to woman's rights, and Captain Denison hastened to express his profound and proper contempt for all such unfeminine nonsense.

"Have you met any of our leading women—those who advocate women's rights, I mean?" asked the young lady, glancing curiously at him, with an odd expression in her bright eyes.

"Not I; no. Nobody meets them, I believe. They are all dreadful creatures." He waxed quite eloquent in denouncing them.

"And you, who talk in this way, are going to be Mrs. Wynter's guest! Don't you know that Mrs. Wynter is a whole-souled sympathizer with the wrongs of her suffering sisters—I think that is the correct phrase—yes, of her suffering sisters?"

"Didn't know, I'm sure. I hope she is not any thing of the kind."

"Past hope, Sir; she *is*. I should not wonder if she had several distinguished representative women to meet you!"

"Oh, pray don't."

"Yes, I think it quite likely. I fancy I heard something about a convention in the village yonder, but I don't quite recollect the date. This is Mr. Wynter's. Is it not a charming place?"

The servant had got down and flung open the gate, and the carriage drove up a beautiful avenue and on to a lawn. The house, which stood upon the lawn, and from the "stoop" of which one had glimpses of a lovely river, and of blue, distant hills, was a large, handsome, irregular, picturesque structure, all windows, verandas, gables, porticoes, and trellises, flaming with bright creeping plants.

Mr. and Mrs. Wynter had come forth, with the genial and hospitable ways of the country, to receive their visitors at the door.

"I have brought you your friend," said the young lady, "and now pray do make us acquainted, for I have not yet the pleasure of knowing his name."

"You are always doing good of some kind, Julia Esslyn," said her hostess, as she cordially kissed the girl; and then the regular presentations were gone through and soon after the party broke up, to meet again at dinner-time. Captain Denison found that his pretty friend, Miss Julia Esslyn, was to be a guest in the house for some days, at which he was greatly pleased She sat next to him at dinner, and they renewed their conversation very agreeably.

Suddenly Miss Esslyn, now addressing her hostess, who was at the other side of Captain Denison, said:

"I am sorry to tell you, Mrs. Wynter, that Captain Denison has a worse than even British prejudice against the advocates of woman's rights. He poured out great eloquence of denunciation against the whole movement and its champions as we came along to-day."

"We must have him converted," said Mrs. Wynter, graciously. "He comes here at a very fortunate time. I am happy to say, Captain Denison, that I expect the honor of a visit from some of the most distinguished advocates of woman's suffrage during your stay here. I thought you would be glad to meet them."

Captain Denison tried to mumble out, "very happy, I'm sure," and shuddered, and broke down.

He forgot his alarm, however, in the enjoyment of a delicious walk in the shrubbery, just at the close of the beautiful evening, with Miss Esslyn. Frank and fearless, like all educated American girls of her class, she was easy, happy, and unconstrained in the company of this English stranger and the English stranger liked her society immensely.

Mr. Wynter joined them after a while, and Miss Esslyn returned to the house. Wynter and his guest strolled and smoked through the grounds until it was quite dark, and then repaired to the drawing-room.

It was but faintly lighted; and Captain Denison on entering saw, as he thought, a small, stout man standing up on the hearth-rug, his back to the fire-place. There was no one else but Mrs. Wynter in the room. When our hero entered Mrs. Wynter rose and said:

"I am so glad you have come, Captain Denison. I wish to present you to a distinguished countrywoman of mine, one of the most celebrated advocates of justice to a trampled sex! Mrs. Carnifex Mango, permit me to introduce to you Captain Denison, of the British army."

Captain Denison bowed and trembled. He had calmly and with unshaking hand lighted a fresh cigar just before taking his place at the head of a storming party to assault the Redan; his cool composure never once failed him through all the terrible trials of Cawnpore; but he looked at Mrs. Carnifex Mango, and his eyes swam and his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth.

Mrs. Carnifex was a stout woman, with a great mass of tow-like hair falling over her shoulders. She wore spectacles and a black coat, something like a truncated riding-habit. "I look down toward his feet," says Othello, "but that's a fable!" "I look down toward her feet," poor Denison might have said, "but that's not a fable." No; beneath the skirts of the long gabardine there appeared, unmistakable, the article of dress which an Englishwoman is only allowed to wear metaphorically. Mrs. Carnifex Mango stood before our hero in trowsers!

"A Britisher!" exclaimed Mrs. Mango, in a loud, harsh voice, and with a dash of pity and contempt in her tone. "And pray, Sir, how does the movement progress in Britain? How is your J. S. Mill?"

Captain Denison stammered out a modest admission that he had not any personal acquaintance with that illustrious man, and that he did not know much about the progress of the movement—in fact, what movement?

"What movement!" exclaimed Mrs. Mango, looking first round the room, and then up toward heaven. "What movement, the prejudiced subject of the old despotism asks of free citizens! The movement, Sir, for the emancipation of the nobler sex from the iron grasp of a debasing tyranny! The movement, Sir, which is to restore woman to herself, which is to enable her to fulfill the glorious mission for which God and nature destined her! The movement, Sir, which is to raise up oppressed and injured woman and place her firmly on her—on her—"

Perceiving that the oratress paused for a word, Captain Denison good-naturedly but feebly suggested "legs;" but the oratress frowned down, waved away the unhappy suggestion, and went on:

"Place her firmly on her true pedestal! You, Sir, are, I perceive, one of those who are prejudiced against woman—"

"Oh dear, no, I do assure you," Denison faintly interposed.

"Your own despotism, Sir, has perverted and destroyed your moral nature. Say, Sir, by what right you claim to tyrannize over my suffering sex?"

"Never did any thing of the kind! Never, upon my honor," pleaded the luckless British officer.

"I perceive, Sir, that you are not acquainted with the bearings of this great question. It is, then, my duty, as one who has taken a conspicuous part in its promulgation, to endeavor to enlighten an ignorant stranger. It is my duty, Sir, and, difficult as the task may be, disagreeable as the task may be, I will endeavor. Sir, to enlighten you."

So she did. She endeavored to enlighten him. She addressed him at great length, and with immense volubility of words and vehemence of gesture. The captain was crushed. By the time she had closed he felt quite broken and spiritless.

"Wonderful woman," said Mrs. Wynter, after the eloquent Mango had taken her departure.

"Splendid intellect," said Mr. Wynter.

"So sorry I could not hear her," said Miss Julia Esslyn, who just now entered the room. "Why do people have headaches at wrong times? Were you not struck with her, Captain Denison?"

"Very much indeed," replied the captain.

"Then, her manners are so graceful and gentle! Nothing unladylike or *prononcé* about her! Some of our lady reformers are, perhaps, a little marked and uncommon in manner, but Mrs. Carnifex Mango is perfection."

"And yet," said Mrs. Wynter, thoughtfully, "I doubt if Miss Athene Puffin will not impress Captain Denison even more deeply."

"Impossible, I think," murmured Captain Denison.

He had some conversation that night with Miss Esslyn, and grew more and more charmed with her grace, her animation, her culture, and refinement. "In the name of all the perplexing demons," he asked of his own soul, "how can this charming and intellectual creature tolerate such a hideous monstrosity as Mrs. Carnifex Mango?"

It was about the dusk of the following evening that our hero had the happiness of being presented to Miss Athene Puffin. Bad as Mrs. Carnifex Mango was, Miss Athene Puffin showed even more appalling in the captain's perplexed and distressed eyes. She had not, indeed, abandoned petticoats; but she wore those garments so hideously lank and long that they were rather more devoid of feminine grace than even Mrs. Mango's pantaloons. Her hair was screwed up in an extraordinary mass, or mop, under an immense hat; and she not only concealed her eyes under spectacles, but concealed them under green spectacles. She bowed a solemn bow when Captain Denison was presented to her, and heaved a sigh. Then she began:

"You are from England, Sir, and seeking, I hope, for the truth?"

"Well—yes—at least I hope so, madam."

"Where have you sought it, Sir?"

A puzzling question, truly! Captain Denison began to ask himself, in hurried mental examination, where he had been seeking for the truth. Well, he had been reading the daily papers; he had been talking with no end of people; he had been—

Athene Puffin loftily waved away his attempted explanations with a grand gesture of the hand.

"The truth, Sir, must be sought of woman. Of woman, Sir! Yes Sir-ree! The new gospel comes from woman. She is nature's last and noblest utterance! She is nature's highest effort. With her the divine intuition supplies the place of the inadequate, played-out reason which man boasts of. Reason is now a dead beat! Of course, Sir, you admit the natural and destined supremacy of woman?"

Oh yes! He was prepared to take his oath of that.

"Have you considered, Sir, the eternal relations of woman with the infinite?"

Well, no; he hadn't exactly considered them, stammered the wretched Briton, but he meant to go to work at considering them at once.

Athene shook her head and smiled with an air of sadness and superiority.

"Man unassisted can not fathom those relationships. His grosser nature is unequal to that sublime task. Woman must aid him and guide him upward. Are you willing, Sir, to be guided upward?"

"If not very high," the captain tried to say.

"I am sure Captain Denison will be only too happy to receive guidance," interposed Mrs. Wynter, sweetly. She and her husband were hanging on the words which fell from Athene's inspired lips.

"Good Heavens!" thought Denison, "how much I have been mistaken in these people! I thought them so intellectual and refined, and they are charmed with this hideous creature and her mad jargon!" In his agony he looked wildly around for Julia Esslyn, but Julia was nowhere to be seen.

"Choose, then," said Athene, rising majestically from her seat—"choose a spiritual guide of the superior sex to enlighten and instruct you during your stay in this place. She will, if she be true to her mission—and any woman under this hallowed roof must be thus true—she will arouse your sleeping intuitions, and open for you your spiritual eyes. Think of the noble women you are privileged to meet here. Think of the lofty insight of Rachel Wynter, the sublime affinities of Carnifex Mango, the—"

"The sanctified aspirations of Athene Puffin," interposed Mrs. Wynter. And she added in an undertone, meant for our hero, "Name Athene Puffin! Don't lose such a chance! Let her be your guide."

A bright idea lit up Denison's distracted mind.

"No, thanks!" he exclaimed, hurriedly; "I fear I am not quite up to the mark of these gifted women. Their intellect would rather appall me. I shouldn't get on at all; I know I shouldn't. But if I must choose, I think I should like for my guide and elevator—is that the word?—or my

affinity, or whatever it is, the young lady who was here just now—Miss Esslyn."

A burst of laughter from both host and hostess saluted this sudden and rash proposal, and Athene shrank back as if overwhelmed with confusion. Indeed, she turned round, and seemed as if about to hurry from the room. But to Denison's horror, Mr. Wynter sprang from his seat, ran to place himself between her and the door, and actually seized the divine Athene's hat—nay, and her hair also, and plucked both from her sublime head. And behold there was no Athene Puffin any longer visible; and there stood in her place, with blushing cheeks, head bent down, and hair falling over her shoulders, the graceful, vivacious Julia Esslyn herself.

"Please, Captain Denison, do forgive me!" she pleaded when she had a little recovered her composure. "It was a dreadful practical joke of mine, concocted in concert with Mr. and Mrs. Wynter. I am a fierce champion, in theory, at least, of the rights of women, and I wanted to punish you for setting all such persons down as hideous old frights. And I had some hope that you might even take the thing so completely *au sérieux* as to write a book on America, and devote at least a whole chapter to Mrs. Carnifex Mango and Miss Athene Puffin, as types of American womanhood; and that would have been such delightful fun for us here who were in the secret."

"Then you were Mrs. Carnifex Mango too?"

"I was. Did I do it well?"

"Need I answer? Didn't you utterly deceive and bewilder me?"

"Oh, I am so glad! But you forgive me, after all, and you won't believe our typical American women are all Mrs. Mangos and Miss Puffins any more?"

Captain Denison gave his full forgiveness, and pledged himself never again to believe in Mangos and Puffins as representatives of emancipated womanhood in America. He has, moreover, given practical proof of his appreciation of American womanhood by falling profoundly in love with Julia Esslyn, and finally persuading her to marry him. He has, in fact, found his affinity.

KING WILLIAM AND THE SOLDIER.

A BRUNSWICK paper gives an anecdote illustrating the King of Prussia's kind-heartedness. A soldier from Stargard, in Mecklenburg, is on outpost before Paris. Here he received a letter from home, and, as he had been a long time without news, he could not refrain from opening it immediately. In reading it he became so absorbed that he had no eye or ear for what passed around him. Suddenly he heard a noise, looked up, and perceived the King and Crown Prince, with their retinue. Startled, he let the letter fall, and gave the customary salute. The King, remarking his anxiety and confusion, stepped up to him in a friendly way, and asked, "Well, a letter from your sweet-heart?" "No, your Majesty, from my father," he replied. "May I read the letter, or are there secrets in it?" asked the King. The soldier handed the letter to the King, who turned to his suit and read, *inter alia*, as follows: "In a fortnight your sister's wedding comes off; we shall all greatly miss you on that day, but your old mother is most of all vexed at not seeing you here. It does not matter, however; only go to the French in earnest, so that the insatiable mouth of those fellows may be very soon stopped." The King returned the letter and rode on. No long time elapsed before the soldier was relieved from post. He received fourteen days' furlough, and was able, at the King's expense, to make a journey to Mecklenburg and attend the wedding.

PURGED IN THE FIRE.

A Christmas Story.

"UNCLE HERBERT, will you tell us a Christmas story? Please, do!" The speaker was only a little maid of six years old, but a dozen voices echoed the request.

It was Christmas, and we were gathered, according to time-honored custom, round a blazing fire under my grandfather's roof. We were a merry party, comprising some fifteen cousins of all ages, with their respective parents, and a few married and unmarried uncles and aunts. Uncle Herbert, otherwise Mr. Herbert Milward, was our uncle by marriage only, as the husband of our aunt Alice; but though thus only indirectly related to us, I think he was, with the younger ones at any rate, the best-beloved of all. Perhaps because he had no children of his own, he was always specially sympathetic in youthful troubles, and specially lenient to youthful misdoings. However grave the offense, we were always sure of uncle Herbert's intercession; though he never failed privately to admonish the offender—very gently, but so gravely and seriously that his quiet words would bring tears to eyes too proud to weep under the severest punishment, and tame the most rebellious spirit to submission and repentance. He could be very merry at times; but there was a gravity mingled even with his merriment, as of one to whom the more solemn aspects of life are always present. His devotion to his wife was remarkable, even to our youthful eyes. No one could say that his affection was demonstrative, and yet no one could be in the company of the two together, even for an hour, without feeling that Aunt Alice was more precious to her husband than any thing else in the world. Wherever his eyes wandered, they always seemed to come back to her as their resting-place; and however deeply, to all appearance, he might be engrossed in conversation with others, he was always able, by some magical process of intuition, to divine her wants or wishes, and silently to supply them. Her furs were the warmest, her silks the softest; nothing was too costly, no trouble too great, that ministered to her pleasure. There seemed to be no such thing as forgetting, no possibility of mistake, wherever she was concerned. If she had found a four-leaved shamrock, and had good fairies constantly attending her, she could hardly have been better served. Nor was Aunt Alice behindhand in returning her husband's devotion. He was many years older than she, but I fancy the difference in their ages increased, if any thing, her pride and pleasure in his love. She never did any thing (indeed she had no need) to test or draw attention to his devotion, but she quietly abandoned herself to his tender care. She seldom thanked him in words, at least in company, but he was thanked enough by the look of perfect love and perfect peace which was the habitual expression of her gentle gray eyes.

On the present occasion Uncle Herbert was seated in a high-backed oaken chair, with Aunt Alice on a footstool beside him, and the rest of the party grouped around in a semicircle before the blazing fire. The candles were not yet lighted, but the dancing flame shed a ruddy light throughout the room, throwing into bold relief the carved work of the oaken furniture, and brightening with a genial glow the red berries and dark green leaves of the Christmas evergreens. It was just the moment for a fireside story; and as Uncle Herbert was known to be learned in legends and German fairy-tales, which he was wont to narrate with much quiet humor, our little cousin's request met with general approval. Uncle Herbert did not immediately reply, but sat apparently reflecting; and the flickering fire-light, playing over his face, showed us that he was in a serious mood. Aunt Alice glanced up at him inquiringly; and I thought to myself that I had never seen her bright young face (for she was many years younger than the rest of our aunts and uncles) look more perfectly beautiful than it did that night; and I caught myself wondering, half-unconsciously, how it had come to pass that she should have married one so much older, and to all appearance so unlike herself, as sober gray-headed Uncle Herbert.

"Well, my dears," said Uncle Herbert at last, "I will tell you a story, a true story. I don't think it is quite what you mean by a Christmas story; but the events about which I am going to tell you happened at Christmas-time, on this very night indeed, twenty-seven years ago."

We all settled down to listen, and, after a minute's pause, he went on:

"It was Christmas-eve, or rather Christmas-day, for twelve o'clock had struck, and the few people left in the streets were getting gradually fewer and fewer, till it seemed as though the policemen and the waits would shortly have London to themselves. It was a bitter cold night, and snow was beginning to fall. Most of the houses were dark and silent, though here and there lighted windows and stray sounds of music and of happy voices showed where a household was seeing Christmas in, and giving a merry welcome to the happy season. Out of a brilliantly lighted house in one of the West End streets there came a young man, who looked as though he felt but little share of the general rejoicing. He was barely twenty years of age; but though so young, his cheeks were flushed and his gait unsteady with wine, and his face was contracted with a look of hopeless despair. And little wonder! The house which he had just left was a noted gaming-house. He had been tempted by bad companions, and had gambled and lost—lost far more heavily than he could afford. One sin brings on another. In the vain hope of recovering his losses—with the insane persuasion, common to all gamblers, that he must win in the end if he could but play a little longer—he had taken without leave a large sum of his employer's money, had staked it, and lost. And then, all at once, a horrible remorse, a mad despair, seized upon him. Now that it was too late he saw the full magnitude of his crime; he knew too well that the money which, when he expected to be able to restore it secretly, he had thought of as borrowed, the law would call by a very different name. He knew now that, disguise it as he might, the taking of that money was a theft. Already he felt in imagination the officer's hand upon his collar, the handcuffs on his wrists. He could see the witnesses come forward to bear testimony to his crime; he could hear the voice of the judge pronouncing sentence on the *thief*. He dared not meet the consequences of his sin; and in his mad despair, fearing to face offended man, he had resolved to rush, by suicide, into the presence of an offended God. He was now hurrying home to drink his last draught on earth, the draught that brings the awful sleep whose waking is eternity. With his hands clenched, and his hat crushed down upon his forehead, he was rushing madly on, when he heard a sound of shouting, and the tramp of galloping horses. He looked up, and saw that the sky above him was red with a lurid glare; and then a runner passed him with the terrible cry of 'Fire!' A house was on fire in one of the streets through which he had to pass; and with a strange feeling of reprieve, he turned aside—turned aside from the road to his death—to see the sight. He elbowed his way through the crowd, which gave way right and left at the pressure of his muscular arms. The dwellers in the burning house had been somehow got out, and now stood half naked and shivering in the street. All, it was thought, were safe; but just as he reached the group there was a fearful shriek, for it was found that there was one, the youngest, missing. The poor mother sobbed and screamed, and was only held back by force from re-entering the burning house, and perishing with her little one. The father, wringing his hands like one distracted, offered a thousand pounds to the firemen, if they would but rescue his child.

"'It can't be done, Sir,' said one of them; 'not if you said a hundred thousand, it couldn't be done. The floors will fall in in five minutes, and it's certain death to enter that house again.'

"The red flame was already shining through the first-floor windows, and through the open door could be heard the roaring of the fire, which was fast gaining hold upon the staircase. A thought flashed across the young man's mind. His minutes were numbered, his life was worthless; its last act should be a worthy one, and if he perished in the attempt, he would be guilty of one sin the less. With quick eager questions he ascertained where the child was. The firemen guessed his intention, and held him back.

"'Don't go, Sir, for God's sake! it's wasting two lives instead of one. We're not cowards, Sir, but this is certain death. If you attempt it, the Lord have mercy on your soul!'

"'Amen!' said the young man; and throwing off the hands that held him back, he rushed into the house and up the staircase, which creaked and crackled under his feet.

"The fire was raging on the first-floor, the child was on the floor above. The first-floor landing was already in flames, but the young man, with a fierce leap, sprang past the burning spot, and in another second was in the room where the child lay. The room was already filled with smoke, and here and there the flames were darting through the crevices of the flooring. He could not see the bedstead, but a little frightened voice, sobbing 'Papa, dear; do come, papa!' guided him to the spot where the child lay. 'I will take you to your papa, dear,' he said; 'don't be frightened.' Then, quick as thought, he wrapped the little one in the blanket, and began to retrace his perilous route. Quick, however, as he had been, the flames had gained ground, and scorched his feet as he stepped over the burning floor. He rushed to the window, thinking that by means of a ladder they might escape that way; but pouring from the windows below him was a sheet of flame. The burning staircase was the only road. Tying his handkerchief round his mouth and nose, to keep out the suffocating smoke, he groped his way to the door. To his horror, he heard a crash—one-half of the staircase had gone.

"A deadly terror seized upon him; the last hope of escape was lost. The life which a few minutes since had seemed a burden too heavy to bear, suddenly grew unutterably precious. His eyes were blinded, his throat scorched by the thick black smoke, and tongues of flame were leaping up around him, seeking to devour him. With awful distinctness all the evil of his life, crowded into that one fearful moment, shone out clear as noonday before his eyes. Instruction wasted, good advice spurned, good resolutions broken, rose up before him; and one and all seemed to drag him down—lost, *lost*, LOST for ever and ever! A moment since he had not dared to live, now he did not dare to die. That awful horror lent him almost superhuman strength. Threading his way through the flames, which were now rising all around him, he crept down as far as he could, and then, grasping the broken hand-rail, swung himself over, and dropped, as best he might, a depth of some fifteen feet, into the hall below. Fearfully burned, he had just strength—still holding his burden in his arms—to stagger into the street, and fell senseless into the firemen's arms.

"For many weeks he hovered between life and death, in the intensest physical and mental agony. For the most part of the time he was delirious, and haunted by the memory of that awful moment when, standing on the brink of death, he had looked over into the abyss of eternity. As he regained his reason a new terror came over him, the dread of the consequences of his crime. He never woke without fearing to find the officers of justice at his bedside, waiting to carry him before the judge. But this last fear had lost its former horror; being, as it were, swallowed up in his overwhelming thankfulness at having been saved from a far greater crime, the crime that knows no repentance. On his bed of pain he prayed as never before—prayed with a penitent and thankful heart; and by the time he was able to sit upright, he was ready to endure without flinching the shame and pain of his punishment. For some weeks the evil day was delayed; but at last, as he was beginning to regain strength, a visitor was announced, and his employer entered the room. With a beating heart, but still resigned, he felt that his hour was come, and nerved himself to meet it. To his surprise, his master made no allusion to his misconduct, but kindly praised his courage and his daring deed; and the thought flashed across him that his folly and sin were still unknown, and if he did but keep his own counsel, might so remain forever. The tempter whispered, "Be silent!" and for a moment he was inclined to yield; but his good angel triumphed. With bowed head and downcast eyes he told the story of his sin, and waited to hear his sentence from the man he had wronged. For a few minutes the good old man (God bless him!) was silent, and then he said, with tears in his eyes:

"'My lad, I am glad that you have told me this, very glad; although I knew it before. You have committed a great sin, and you have suffered a heavy punishment. Thank God, who in his mercy has saved you from a far greater sin—a sin whose punishment is for ever and ever. You have been through a fiery trial; let your future life show that you have been truly "purged in the fire." For your offense against myself, God forbid that I should add to your punishment—I forgive you with all my heart, my boy, and you need have no fear about coming back to your old place in the office, for no one except myself will ever know a word of the matter. One thing, however, you must promise me—never to enter a gambling-house, or to stake money at play again."

"'That I do, Sir, upon my hon—' he began, and then stopped short, as the unfitness of the word, from one in his situation, flashed cruelly upon him.

"'Nay, lad,' said the old man, holding out his hand, 'don't take it back, that is just the way in which I want your promise. Upon your *honor*, mind. It is a little tarnished now; let it be the labor of your life to make and keep it bright.'

"And, with God's help, he did. He rose from that bed, where for so many weeks he had lain in peril of his life, an altered man. His former friends wondered at the change, and declared that he had left his youth in the fire; but they knew nothing of the fiercer fire which during those long weeks had raged in his bosom, and had scorched away the relish for youthful follies. Having stood so awfully near to death, he had learned to value life; and to strive so to use life that death should be no longer terrible. And so striving, God prospered him. The father of the little girl he had saved was a wealthy man, and with generous kindness helped him even against his will. His kind old master stood his faithful friend, and even made opportunities of showing his confidence in him; and for many years past he has been a partner in the firm, a rich and respected merchant. Very few people know his story. It is not a very merry one, but it was uppermost in my mind when Effie asked for a story—it mostly is on Christmas-eve—and therefore I have told it to you."

"Who was the young man, uncle?" said a childish voice. "Have we ever seen him?"

"Yes, my dear, you know him very well."

"But what became of the little girl that was saved, uncle? Is she alive still?"

"My dears," said Uncle Herbert, "the little girl is now your aunt Alice."

Just then the fire-light, which had grown dim, flickered up into a blaze. Aunt Alice bent over Uncle Herbert's hand and kissed it, and as she raised her head, we could see that there were tears in her eyes.

And we guessed the rest of the story.

A PRUSSIAN AMAZON.

A PRUSSIAN paper gives some particulars of a female soldier in the Prussian army, whose name is Bertha Weiss. She was born at Schönberg, and educated at a respectable establishment at Ragnit. She soon, however, evinced a singular preference for manly attire, and acted as civilian servant to a captain of the Sixty-ninth Regiment at Treves, with whose family she had occasion to make long journeys to the south. Her good conduct induced her master to provide for her further education, so that she was competent to pass the ensign's examination. Shortly before the war, provided with a recommendation from the captain, and without being subjected to a strict surgical examination, she entered his regiment, and took part in the battle of Spicheren. Transferred to the Crown Prince's regiment, she succeeded, in the battle of Gravelotte, first alone, and afterward supported by two men only, in recovering the flag of the Sixteenth infantry regiment, which had been seized by the French. She received in this exploit four bullet wounds, one of which, in the knee, disabled her from walking. She received from Prince Frederick Charles for her bravery the second class of the Iron Cross, as well as an autograph certificate couched in the most flattering terms. She is therein styled Bernard von Weiss, and is granted a furlough. The lady is twenty-four years of age, and has prepossessing features.

INTELLIGENCE OF THE PRUSSIAN SOLDIERY.

WHERE every man is a soldier, no man is a mere mercenary. Hans, Hermann, and Carl feel their individual responsibility to the Fatherland as strongly as the general who commands them. The Prussian soldier would not skulk a battle or "fudge" his sentry duty for worlds. He does his soldiering conscientiously, not as a mere military machine, with a tendency to go out of order on temptation. Many a time have men been found on sentry a mile at least out of the ken of any authority, and where they might have broken the rule against smoking on sentry with perfect impunity, and no untoward results. Most people know what a smoke is to a German, and it may be easily imagined how the craving is intensified if he has not seen the color of tobacco smoke for a fortnight. When offered a cigar, they have accepted it, but never would any man take a light. Indeed, the offer was resented with some acerbity. The Prussian soldiers are all well-educated, and it is a truism not worth repeating that natural intelligence is developed and added to by education. They understand military operations, and delight in seeing them successfully worked out. With the political complications which have led to the war they are familiar, and each man desires to see the war successful because of the ultimate benefit success will confer on his country, and not out of a mere frothy desire not to be "licked." The intelligence of the Prussian troops, and the convictions and aspirations to which well-directed intelligence invariably gives rise, utterly banish from among them grumbling or malingering. It aids greatly also in preserving the health of the army, for to it must be ascribed the almost uniform sobriety of the troops, which does so much to ward off the ailments to which large bodies of troops, often in unfavorable circumstances, are so liable. All men who have seen active service know how a frantic "spree" to-day is followed by dysentery to-morrow, and possibly by cholera the day following. The Prussians never indulge in a frantic "spree," and so escape the consequent disorders. They will bivouac beside a full and open wine-cellar, and hardly drink more than if they were visiting the locality merely, and had to pay for every thing.

CHRISTMAS-TIME—FEEDING THE PETS.—[DRAWN BY A. E. EMSLIE.]